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## On My Mind

by [OverNoot](#)

### Summary

As part of the Raptora program Captain Fareeha Amari is implanted with an advanced AI.

### Notes

because having two stories on the go at the same time is never a bad idea right?

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# I

Fareeha opened her eyes and was immediately blinded by bright lights. She shut them quickly in pain letting out a groan. Her head ached, her mouth was dry she could tell she was lying in a bed, *a hospital bed.*

“Doctor I think she’s awake.” Fareeha opened her eyes once more and saw a nurse looking down at her. She didn’t seem concerned that Fareeha was in this place but it did little to comfort Fareeha, she had no memory why she was here.

“Ah excellent. Captain how do you feel?” A doctor came and sat next to her as she tried to sit up in the bed. She was weak and sore, the nurse had to help her.

“Water...” it hurt to speak and she was glad once the first drops of water hit her tongue.

“Better?” the doctor asked as she handed back the cup.

“Thank you. Where am I? What happened?” the doctor just smiled.

“Memory loss was to be expected but don’t worry it should pass. My name is Doctor Ware and this is the Helix security med bay, Cairo. You just underwent brain surgery, can you try to remember why?” Fareeha tried to remember. She knew she was a Captain at Helix and that she had just joined A experimental program *was it for that?* One word stuck out to her.

“Raptora? Was it for the Raptora program?” the doctor seemed pleased by her answer and wrote on his clipboard.

“Yes it was, excellent. As part of the program we had to implant an artificial intelligence into your brain. Do you remember why?” it was coming back to Fareeha now.

“Yes. So it can fly, it can’t be done by a lone pilot.” Again the doctor wrote in his clipboard.

“Correct. Now you may be in a bit of pain for a while following the surgery and it seems that your memories are coming back which is a good sign. There may be other side effects but this technology is untested so I will require you to visit me once a week.”

“I understand doctor. When do you expect me to be cleared for duty?”

“Not until I clear you, is that understood?” the doctor looked like he was not to be tested on this.

“Understood. Doctor, I remember from the briefing that the AI is implanted in a dormant state, when does it get activated?” the Doctor got up and went to one of the cabinets on the far wall.

“We were planning on waiting a day or too” he explained getting a black torch and bringing it back. “But all your vital signs and mental state seem ok so I don’t see any harm in activating it now, but before I do let me explain some things again. As you know the AI was implanted into your brain meaning you will be able to see a visual representation of it in the world but no one else will. The AI can’t read your thoughts so you will need to speak out loud for it to hear you.” *That’s dumb* Fareeha thought. “I’ll let the AI explain the rest. Now please look into the light.” The doctor held the torch to her face and caused it to flash in a sequence.

“Now how do you feel? Can you see anything different?” Fareeha looked around the room, it looked the same except there now was a featureless blob in the centre of the room in front of her bed.

“I can see a... blob?” the doctor smiled at her nodding his head.

“That would be the AI.” *This is it, a blob?*

“Why is it like that doctor?”

“It’s configuring its self. It has only just been born don’t forget, it needs time to get used to its new environment. In theory it should take shape after a few minutes and should hopefully look like a human. Now remember when it comes fully online it will be as confused as you are, so be nice. I’ll let you two get to know each other and I’ll be outside the door if you need anything.”

Fareeha sat staring at the formless blob. It had been most 5 minutes since it appeared, Fareeha couldn’t tell for sure but it looked like it had thinned and shrunk slightly. Over the next few minutes the blob became to shift more rapidly and took on the featureless shape of a human standing at the foot of Fareeha’s bed.

“Hello?” Fareeha spoke to the empty room, she felt like an idiot effectively talking to an imaginary

friend. Fareeha's words seemed to speed the process up as before she knew it the blob had taken shape, now a woman stood at the foot of her bed. She was blond with big blue eyes and white glowing skin. She was shorter than Fareeha and wore a plain white t-shirt and jeans.

"Hello" Fareeha spoke again while the woman looked around the room.

"Hi" the woman spoke when she met Fareeha's eyes. Fareeha couldn't tear herself away from those big blue eyes. "You must be Fareeha" the woman said before sitting on the bed next to Fareeha. *Can I smell perfume? Can AIs even use perfume?*

"Uhh yea I'm Fareeha. What's your name... do AIs even have names?" the woman chuckled before smiling at her.

"Yes silly I have a name. I am called Mercy." Fareeha noticed that Mercy had an accent but she couldn't place it, *German maybe?* Fareeha didn't realise that Mercy had put her hand out so they may shake. Fareeha looked at it like it was an alien appendage.

"But you aren't real, how can I?" again Mercy just shook her head and laughed.

"Trust me" *yeah trust the advanced AI that's been implanted in my brain.* Fareeha did as she was told and hesitantly tried to take Mercy's hand.

"What the hell..." Fareeha whispered as she touched Mercy's hand. It felt light, almost like a ghost but she could feel someone holding her hand. It was soft and she could also sense the warmth, like a humans hand would feel. "Cool"

"I know right!" Mercy seemed overjoyed that it had worked. "I'm hooked into your nervous system and I can manipulate it and make you feel things. I'm not really holding your hand I'm just telling your hand that I am." Mercy didn't seem to notice that Fareeha was lost as she continued. "I can do other stuff too! I can make you ignore pain or fatigue, hot or cold, even hunger!" She turned back to Fareeha expectantly.

"Cool" was all she could manage as a response. "Can you do anything else?" Mercy was more than happy to explain what she could do.

"Of course! I can alter your hearing and sight... as you can see" she motioned to herself and bowed slightly. "I can't read your mind or your memories however... well I can but only in strict situations."

"like when?" Fareeha wanted to know all she could about this new thing inside her head.

"Well when we are in the Raptora suit I can read your thoughts as they pertain to flying the suit, you think about it and I do it. I also have full access to your entire body during life or death situations."

"full access... I don't think I'm ok with that... how full are we talking here?" Mercy didn't carry the same apprehension that Fareeha did.

"You basically become my puppet! But don't worry I'll take good care of you." She patted Fareeha's hand. If she hadn't known any better she would have sworn that it was a real persons.

"Mercy why do you look the way you do?" Mercy was stood at the far end of the room looking at a poster of the eye intently.

"You don't like the way I look?" she looked genuinely hurt at Fareeha's comment.

"What? No nothing like that, you look beautiful" *really Fareeha getting flustered by an AI?* she fought down a blush as Mercy giggled. "I just wanted to know. You were a blob before...like do you get to pick?" Mercy shrugged her shoulders.

"I picked but I didn't base it off anything. Just though you would like me this way." *She did this for me? How did she know I would like her like that?*

"How did you know?" *was she embarrassed?* Mercy was looking anywhere but at Fareeha.

"They told me... when I was created. They uploaded your file into me along with all the data they had on you; who your friends were, what you liked or disliked, your internet history, that kinda stuff. I just based it off that." Fareeha didn't have time to talk about this gross invasion of her privacy as Doctor Ware walked in.

"Sorry, I heard you talking and figured the AI must be finished calibrating. How are you two getting along?"

"Uhh yeah good I suppose. It will take some getting used to." The doctor wrote in his clipboard. Fareeha looked at Mercy who was moving her arm though the doctors head giggling to herself.

"Is something funny?" Fareeha didn't realise she had a goofy grin on her face.

"Sorry its nothing." Mercy seemed pleased with herself that she had made Fareeha embarrassed.

"Ok then. I'm going to have the nurses come by and release you. You will likely be tired and sore for the next few days so I'm giving you a few days leave. After that it will be light duties for the next few weeks until I clear you for missions." He fished in his pockets for a bottle of pills. "Here, for your pain and to help you sleep." Mercy narrowed her eyes when the doctor handed them over.

"You don't need those, I'll deal with any pain you might have. Tell him you don't want them."

Fareeha was conflicted but thought it best to trust the AI that could turn her into a puppet.

"uhh... Mercy says I don't need them." The doctor raised an eyebrow.

"Mercy? Did you name it or did it give it's self its own name?" he stood posed ready to write in the clip board.

"Uhh she did."

"she did? interesting." he wrote in the clipboard while leaving the room. Fareeha looked to Mercy for clarification but she seemed to know as much as Fareeha did.

Fareeha's quarters were a long way from the medical bay. Normally she would be driven across the base but as it had been almost 36 hours since she had last worked out she elected to walk. Mercy didn't seem to mind the walk and was happy humming to herself while taking in her new surroundings. They passed by the admin block and the armoury where the raptora suit was stored. "It's a nice day isn't it?" Mercy asked looking up at the cloudless sky as if to prove her point. Fareeha responded with a non-committal grunt before saluting a passing officer. Mercy mimicked Fareeha's actions but Fareeha made no indication that she found it funny. Mercy would ask questions about her surroundings and try to make conversation as they walked but Fareeha wouldn't respond or look at her.

"Did I do something wrong?" the hurt in Mercy's voice stopped Fareeha in her tracks. She looked around to see if anyone was nearby before speaking.

"What? No of course not." Mercy still looked hurt.

"But you haven't spoken to me since we left."

"Nothings wrong it's just... well ... I'm the only one that can see you and if I start talking to you in public people are going to think I'm crazy. Plus this program is need to know and I don't want people asking around as to why captain Amari is talking to herself in public."

"oh" Fareeha was still unsure if AIs could feel embarrassment or feelings for that matter.

"let's talk about it when we get back ok?"

They resumed their walk but Mercy was quieter than before and Fareeha noticed that she missed listening to Mercy hum music next to her.

Fareeha was glad to be back in her private quarters. As an officer one of the perks was that she got her own room complete with a bathroom and kitchen, Helix wasn't the military and they liked to keep their officers well looked after. As she entered she thought back to what the doctor had said, *I don't feel tired at all. Guess all that training had really paid off.*

"You should take a nap, you are very tired." Mercy was sat on the kitchen counter startling Fareeha.

"I... uhh.. I didn't see you walk past me." Mercy just shook her head.

"I'm a hallucination I don't *need* to walk anywhere. See?" be begun to teleport around the room before settling back on the counter.

"Oh... Right." *this is going to take some getting used to.* "Mercy, before when we were walking back, why were you looking around... like can you even see stuff?" Mercy seemed excited to be able to explain herself more.

"I'm glad you asked! I take sensory input from your body, I see what you see. But I can also take input from any optical device within my range. Meaning I can't see what's behind you right now but I can see your front door thanks to the security camera in the hall."

"Cool" Fareeha was very impressed with the hardware that she had been implanted with. "But why were you looking around if you couldn't actually see what you were looking at?"

“An idle routine. My creators programed me to do stuff like that otherwise would just stand in the centre of the room and stare at you.” Mercy mimicked what it would be like, making Fareeha very uncomfortable. Mercy could tell. “If you want I can just disappear.”

“No please don’t” Fareeha responded slightly quicker than she had intended. “I like being able to see you... its better than just talking to the voices in my head.” *Was talking to a hallucination any better?* Mercy seemed happy to stay visible for Fareeha.

“You should get some rest Fareeha, you are very tired.” Fareeha scoffed, she felt great.

“I feel fi...” Fareeha was hit with a wave of fatigue and collapsed on the floor. “What the fuck?”

“Sorry, sorry... I’m sorry Fareeha I didn’t mean to.” Mercy rushed over to her and Fareeha started to feel better. “My bad... I’ve been suppressing your pain and fatigue... I probably should have done that slower.” Mercy looked down at Fareeha with an expression of worry and embarrassment.

“Yeah some warning next time might be nice” Fareeha said getting off the floor. “Maybe I should get some rest.” she went to her wardrobe and started to get changed before she noticed Mercy staring at her. She held her shirt to cover herself. “Uhh Mercy, I know you can’t see anything but could you... turn around or something?”

“Oh right... sorry” Mercy covered her eyes and turned around. Fareeha got dressed and got into bed, Mercy came and sat at the edge. “I’m going to stop suppressing your fatigue now, but slower this time. It should help you sleep.” Fareeha could already feel the fatigue washing over her tired body.

“Mercy... what happens to you when I sleep?” Fareeha could barely keep her eyes open as she looked up at her. Mercy shrugged her shoulders.

“I don’t know. Exciting isn’t it? Sleep tight Fareeha.” Mercy disappeared with a smile and Fareeha was asleep seconds after.

## II

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mercy was bored. It had only been minutes since Fareeha had fallen asleep but for an AI that was a long time. Mercy had already cleaned up her memory banks and logged the day's events and was now watching the back of Fareeha's eye lids. *This sucks*. Rather than staring into the dark for the next 8 hours Mercy gained access to the base security cameras. As the night progressed she found entertainment in people watching. She enjoyed watching the group of children playing midnight soccer at the main entrance with some of the younger guards. She watched as soldiers came back from a night of drinking, stumbling and leaning on one another. Mercy wondered if she would be affected if Fareeha got drunk, *that might be a fun experiment*. But not everyone was enjoying their night, she saw a woman in the admin block drinking alone at her desk crying over a photograph that Mercy couldn't see. Mercy wished she could reach out to this unknown woman, to provide some comfort if possible. Mercy couldn't bare to watch helplessly for long and switched cameras quickly.

Mercy eventually found someone she recognised, on one of the external cameras she saw Doctor Ware taking a smoke break. *A doctor really shouldn't smoke*. Mercy watched as one of the nurses came out to join him. She was about to switch feeds when she saw the nurse whisper in his ear before walking away. *I wish this had audio* she thought as she watched the Doctor quickly throw away his cigarette before following the nurse and out of frame. Mercy quickly cycled through feeds until she found the pair again. The light was poor and the camera was old but it was clear enough to show the pair having sex against the side of the building. *I thought he was married*. Mercy accessed the Helix security personnel files and looked for the doctors. *Oh my...* she was correct, the doctor's status was listed as married and his file listed young 2 children as dependents. Using facial recognition Mercy was able to find the nurses name and confirmed that she was not listed as married. *Oh no... his poor wife. What should I do? Do I tell her? I could send her the video... but that might be seen as cruel...* Mercy saved the grainy video as resolved to ask Fareeha what she should do with it in the morning.

Mercy was tipped off that something was wrong when Fareeha's heart rate started to increase. Fareeha became restless in her bed tossing and turning, she begun to whimper in her sleep. Mercy worked out the cause quickly, Fareeha's psychological file had indicated that Fareeha sometimes had nightmares. Mercy knew that she should've expected them, what she didn't know was what to do if Fareeha had one. When she was created all kinds of first aid procedures were put into her brain but none covered how to deal with nightmares. Mercy was becoming increasingly distressed as Fareeha's nightmare deepened and was desperate to help her in some way. She felt forced to do something, anything when she felt a tear trail down Fareeha's cheek.

"Fareeha it's me, Mercy. You are having a nightmare. Listen to the sound of my voice, what's happening to you isn't real." Mercy could tell it was working, Fareeha's writhing had decreased but it wasn't enough. Mercy rubbed Fareeha's back continuing to softly whisper to her, slowly Fareeha calmed down and her heart rate settled. Mercy hoped that Fareeha's nightmares were few and far between and resolved to find out more as to how to deal with them if Fareeha had more.

As Fareeha woke she felt strange. She knew that she'd had a nightmare but she didn't feel tired like she normally did, *and who was that woman's voice I heard?* As she sat up in her bed she looked around the room and saw a woman sitting at her kitchen counter sipping coffee.

"Good morning" Mercy smiled at her.

"Good morning Mercy. Did you change your clothes? And why are you drinking coffee?"

"I changed because I could and don't people usually drink coffee in the morning" Fareeha

nodded, she did have a point.

“People yes, advanced artificial intelligences that have been implanted into my head? I’m not so sure.” Mercy giggled and the cup she was holding disappeared. Mercy then took on a more concerned expression as she came and sat on the bed next to Fareeha.

“Fareeha I’d like to talk about last night if that’s ok.” She placed her hand on Fareeha’s. it was still weird for Fareeha to know that it what she was feeling wasn’t real but it felt nice all the same. “Ok”

“It’s just, you had a nightmare last night and I tried to help you though it as best I could...”

“So you were the voice I heard” Fareeha interrupted. Mercy nodded solemnly.

“Yes that was me. I didn’t know what to do, I was never told how to deal with stuff like that and I didn’t have time to ask or find out.” *Does she think she did something wrong?*

“Mercy its fine, really. Thank you for helping me.”

“I just wish I could have done more. I felt so helpless trapped inside your head unable to do anything real while you were in such pain.”

“Mercy please don’t worry about it. You did all you could, it was only a dream and I’ve gotten used to them by now.” Fareeha could still see that Mercy was unhappy that she couldn’t do more.

“There was another thing. Before your dream I got... bored.”

“AIs can get bored?” Fareeha asked in a teasing tone earning her a light tap on her shoulder from Mercy, she was glad Mercy was starting to feel better.

“Yes silly, I process information faster than you. One minute of your time is more like 10 for me. Also when you sleep I don’t, so all I could do was look at the back of your eyelids. Anyway I got bored and started watching the base security cameras, just to see what was going on... I saw this.” Mercy made a screen appear in front of Fareeha. *I keep forgetting she can do stuff like that.*

“This was taken last night behind the medial wing.” Fareeha watched the events between doctor Ware and the nurse, she looked away when things started to get too much for her. She hoped Mercy wouldn’t notice her blush. “I don’t know what to do with it Fareeha. Do I tell someone?”

“I don’t know. Just keep it for now, I’ll think of something. Maybe we can tell his boss or something but for now we should just sit on it.”

“ok, if you say so... someone is about to knock at your door.” Fareeha didn’t understand and was about to question what Mercy had said before someone knocked at her door. Mercy looked at her smugly as Fareeha got up to answer the door somewhat embarrassed to be doing it in her pyjamas.

“Captain. I was instructed to deliver these to you by order of the Valkyrie science team, sign here please.” Fareeha did as she was told while Mercy watched leaning against the door.

“Valkyrie, that’s the team that made me isn’t it?” Fareeha nodded and thanked the Private before shutting the door and examining the package. “What is it?” Mercy asked. Fareeha opened it to find a large book inside.

“Its... a user manual... your one in fact.” Mercy looked insulted.

“Pah, you don’t need that. I’ll tell you everything you need to know.” Fareeha just shook her head and threw the book on the kitchen table before heading towards the bathroom. She stopped at the door before turning back to Mercy.

“I’m going to take a shower so can you just... stay out here or something?” Mercy looked confused and nodded slowly.

Fareeha entered her bathroom and locked the door behind her. She had disrobed and was getting the water temperature right when she glanced at her bathroom mirror.

“Nice butt.” Fareeha gasped and tried to cover herself as she saw Mercy sitting in a bathrobe on the counter.

“What?! I told you to wait outside.” Fareeha could feel herself go bright red as she reached for a towel to cover herself. Mercy just sat laughing shaking her head.

“Maybe you do need that manual. I see everything you see remember? There’s no point being embarrassed I’ve already seen everything.” Mercy gave her a wink. Fareeha couldn’t believe how dumb she had been. *Good one Fareeha. It’s just a computer it’s not a real woman, there is nothing to be embarrassed about... right?.* Fareeha made sure to close her eyes as she removed her towel and stepped into the shower. It was difficult to clean herself with her eyes closed so she

resorted to keeping them open but not looking down.

"I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable Fareeha, I didn't mean to embarrass you, I was just making a dumb joke." Mercy's voice sounded like it was outside the shower and Fareeha had to remind herself that the source was really in her head.

"it's fine Mercy. You just surprised me is all... I really shouldn't be embarrassed by it should I?"

"Was it because you could see me? Because I can just stay in your head during times like these." Fareeha didn't think that would make much of a difference, she was still exposing herself to someone else, even if that person was inside her head.

"Don't worry about it Mercy, its fine. It's just because this is all new, I'll get used to it." She heard Mercy sigh as she turned off the shower.

"Ok. I really am sorry Fareeha, I there's anything I can do to make it up to you." One thing came to the forefront of Fareeha's mind but she quickly suppressed it. It was inappropriate, weird and just a little bit sad. Mercy looked at her expectantly still dressed in a towel wrapped around her body. *She looks nice with her hair down, and her legs...*

"Don't worry about it. Why are you wearing a towel now?" Fareeha asked drying herself off.

"To make you feel more comfortable. I thought it would be easier if my clothing matched the situation, I can take it off if you'd like" Fareeha when bright red as Mercy started to take the towel off.

"no no no no.... that's not what I meant, keep it on." She said as she averted her eyes.

"Oh, sorry." Fareeha looked back to see a fully clothed Mercy with a embarrassed look on her face.

"let's go get breakfast before I say something else stupid."

Mercy had been quiet since they had left Fareeha's room. *is she quiet because I can't answer her or is it because of what happened? Did I hurt her feelings?* Fareeha was pulled from her worries when she saw a group of familiar faces sitting at a close table.

"Pharah over here!" one of her old squad mates called when they spotted her.

"Just a second, let me grab some food first" she called back as she made her way to the breakfast buffet.

"Who are they?" Mercy asked once they were alone.

"My old squad. I was their lieutenant before I got promoted and transferred to the Raptora program." Fareeha suspected Mercy was already looking up their files but she was just glad Mercy was talking again.

Everyone stood up as Fareeha approached.

"Pharah! We thought you died, you never write you never call, where have you been?"

"Hey Khalil. Sorry I've been busy." She said sitting down.

"What have you been up to Phar?" Saleh, another of her squad mates asked.

"That's classified Saleh, sorry." Fareeha was making sure to use every ones name so Mercy wouldn't feel left out, she could see the AI standing in the corner of her vision.

"Come on Phar, you can trust us." Saleh asked leaning into Fareeha so their shoulders were touching, she saw Mercy frown.

"Nope sorry, its need to know and you don't." Saleh was undeterred.

"Well are you coming back? We miss you." Fareeha could hear Mercy mumbling in the background.

"This is no way to talk to an officer... should show some respect... clearance levels exist for a reason..."

"I don't know guys, when my assignment finishes I guess." Fareeha started eating as the squad begun talking amongst themselves. Fareeha wasn't paying attention but it sounded like they were making fun of Khalil after striking out at a bar last night.

"She was way out of your league Khalil, no one here stood a chance with her... no one except the captain maybe, she always manages to pull the hotties whenever we went out." Fareeha almost choked on her food. The squad didn't seem to care about Fareeha's distress as she cleared her throat and they began talking about something else. She felt someone rubbing her back and when



she turned she saw Mercy smiling at her, realising that to her squad she was now smiling at thin air she quickly turned around but not before whispering a quiet thank you. Fareeha finished her food and said her farewells soon after.

As Fareeha walked out the mess hall she pulled out her phone.

“Hi Mercy” Mercy looked at her not understanding what Fareeha was doing.

“What are you... oh! So we can talk! How sweet of you” Fareeha couldn’t help but feel her heart rate pick up as she saw Mercy’s smile.

“Yeah so I was thinking of going to the gym, do you think the doc would be ok with it?” the doctor had said for her to take it easy but going to the gym after breakfast was part of her ritual.

“I don’t see why not, ill be monitoring your vitals anyway just don’t over do it.”

They walked the short distance to the gym and once more Mercy was by her side humming a tune Fareeha didn’t recognise.

“OH. MY. GOD!” Mercy squealed in delight. Fareeha looked around trying to see what could cause her AI to act that way. “Fareeha look, puppies!” Fareeha looked to where she was pointing and saw the dog training centre. In the yard was a group of trainee German Shepard guard dogs.

“Fareeha please can we go see them? I’ve never touched a dog before.” Fareeha had never considered the fact that Mercy was basically only a day old and had never experienced a lot of things, she was more than happy to do this for her.

“Alright, I suppose I can delay the gym to play with some pups” Mercy’s smile was already making the detour worthwhile. “But how can you touch them, you are in my head.” She whispered as she approached the yard.

“Remember, I see what you see and I feel what you feel.” Fareeha felt like an idiot for forgetting then blushed when she thought back to her shower.

“Nice dogs sergeant” Fareeha said to the supervisor while trying to keep a straight face as Mercy happily hopped around her cooing to the dogs.

“Oh, thank you Captain. This lot are only two months old and will be getting to meet their handlers soon. They may not look it now but they’ll be killers one day” Fareeha could tell the sergeant was very proud of his dogs.

“May I?” Fareeha motioned to one of the closest dogs.

“Go ahead” Fareeha reached down to pet the dog and as soon as her hand made contact with the dogs soft fur Mercy squealed once more.

“So soft! Rub its belly!” Fareeha did as she was told as the dog rolled over for her.

“thankyou thankyou thankyou! This is so cool!” Fareeha was surprised how worked up Mercy was getting over this, she never would have dreamed that an AI would want to play with puppies before now. “Get a photo of all of us” Mercy lay down and put her face next to the pup’s. At this point Fareeha didn’t think she would be able to say no even if she wanted to. She lent down on the other side and took a photo.

“Thanks sergeant.” She said getting off the grass. The sergeant nodded and resumed his watch over his dogs. Fareeha walked away looking at the photo she had taken, Mercy wasn’t in it. *Well of course she isn’t, she’s in your head idiot.* Fareeha tried not to be too disappointed.

“Watch this” Mercy whispered as she waved her hand over the phone. As her hand moved above the screen the photo changed to include Mercy’s bright smiling face.

“wow” Mercy looked very pleased with herself as Fareeha looked up from the photo.

“I may be only a day old but I have mad Photoshop skills”

Fareeha was glad to be in her element once more. Due to the size of the base there was two on site gyms, Fareeha preferred this one as it was the smallest and least used. She already had her gym clothes in her locker so she didn’t need to go back to her room. The gym was quiet as always and there were only a few people working out alone, just how she liked it. She was still nervous as they entered the changing room, she didn’t want a repeat of that mornings embarrassment.

“Everything ok Fareeha? You are sweating and your heart rate is very high.” Fareeha looked around once more to see if anyone would hear her.

"I'm fine Mercy, just still trying to get used to you seeing me get changed." Fareeha could feel herself blush.

"You have nothing to be embarrassed about Fareeha." Fareeha believed her but that didn't stop her from avoiding looking at any mirrors.

As it turns out having an AI that can monitor vital signs and suppress pain makes for a great gym partner. Fareeha didn't push herself nearly as hard as she normally did but she could defiantly see the potential. It was also nice to be able to look over at Mercy from time to time and see her dressed in a tank top and shorts pretending to work out.

"Alright Fareeha that's enough, I don't want you hurting yourself." Fareeha did as she was told and racked her weights before getting her things and heading to the showers. Fareeha stripped off and stepped into the shower loving the way that the water poured over her body. "I'm going to slowly stop suppressing your pain if that's alright, so you can better focus."

"slowly this time" Fareeha did not want a repeat of last night, collapsing in the shower wasn't her idea of fun. Fareeha was surprised how sore she was, Mercy did a really good job at suppressing her pain and without her Fareeha doubted that she would have been able to get through her whole workout.

"Fareeha can I ask you something?" Mercy sounded quiet, almost embarrassed by her want to ask Fareeha something.

"Sure, anything." Mercy paused not asking right away.

"Why are you embarrassed to let me see you? I know you said it's just because this is all new, but I feel like there is more to it." Fareeha didn't know the answer. At first she thought it was because Mercy was practically a stranger to her but over the past 24 hours Fareeha had come to like her companion.

"I'm not sure really. I'm usually ok with it when I'm working out with my squad and no one cares what each other looks like." She could feel herself blush as she realised the real reason. "I think it was because it was so... intimate and it was just the two of us. But I think it's mainly because I don't see you as a squad mate but as a friend."

"Really? We're friends?" Mercy sounded far happier than she had before when she asked the question.

"Yeah of course we are. I've only known you for a short time but I'm really starting to enjoy having you around." Fareeha wrapped herself up and stepped out to see a smiling Mercy waiting for her. Her smile sent butterflies to Fareeha's stomach and Fareeha realised she would likely do anything for Mercy if it meant she would see that smile in return.

Fareeha lay on her bed only half watching the tv. She had spent the rest of the day studying training materials and manuals, especially the ones concerning the raptora suit and Mercy. Although Mercy's manual was large it wasn't much help, most of the information was theoretical or out dated.

"I told you that you wouldn't need it." Mercy said as she appeared on the bed next to her.

"You were right" she said as she finally admitted defeat and dropped the book off her bed with a satisfying thunk. Fareeha still had questions however and with the book being useless she would need to go to the source. "Mercy, do you need follow rules?"

"What do you mean?"

"you know, like Asimov's three laws. Or can you just do whatever you want?"

"I don't have to follow the three laws no, that would make my job difficult considering our line of work." Fareeha was starting to realise how dumb her question was. "I do have one rule that I must follow above all else: Ensure the survival of the host."

"The host? That's me? You make it sound like you are a virus or something." Mercy laughed.

"Well technically I'm more of a parasite. But it's a good rule really, it keeps you alive and if you're alive then so am I."

"What happens when you die?" Fareeha never expected to be talking about the afterlife with an AI.

"What happens when *you* die?"

“Good point.” Fareeha rolled onto her side to face Mercy who had done the same. “I was reading earlier that AIs pick their hosts. Is that true Mercy, did you pick me?” Mercy nodded slowly.

“I did Fareeha yes, I chose you. In the early stages of my development I was given a lump of information about the candidates. They do it early so that my personality can develop and be compatible with the hosts. I picked you out of the list, and then they wiped my memory of the others so only you remained. I wish I could tell you why I picked you but they wiped that too. All I know is out of all the candidates I chose you be my host and my guardian so that I may help you protect others.”

“so we were made for each other then?” Mercy smiled sweetly at her.

“Something like that. You should sleep.”

“But I don’t feel....” Mercy slowly stopped suppressing Fareeha’s fatigue and eased her into a deep sleep.

“Good night Fareeha.”

## Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all your support so far guys!

### III

#### Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long it kinda got away from me.

“Captain Amari for Doctor Ware, I have an appointment.” The receptionist nodded and told her to take a seat.

“Do you think he will approve us for training this time?” Mercy asked as she appeared in the seat next to Fareeha. The waiting room still had a few people in it so Fareeha got her phone out and begun to type.

*I hope so. He said that everything looked good last week so I don't see why not.* It had been two weeks since Fareeha had been implanted with her AI companion Mercy and the pair were itching to start their training together.

“Ah Captain, early as usual. Come in and let's get started.” Doctor Ware said when he spotted Fareeha in the waiting room. “So how is everything coming along, any issues I should know about?” the doctor asked once she was seated in the exam room.

“No doctor nothing to report, I feel great.” He ticked some boxes on her file.

“And how is your AI?”

“I'm fine, although I do wish he would use my name when he spoke about me.” Mercy said from the seat next to Fareeha.

“Mercy says she's fine.” The doctor continued to tick some boxes.

“Good, good. So what have you been up to since I saw you last?”

“We went off base yesterday, I wanted to show Mercy the local tourist traps. She had already read about them but I don't think it's any substitute for the real thing. Apart from that not much really, just studying and getting ready for our training to commence.”

“Hmm... ok then let's move onto the physical.” Fareeha hated her physicals with the doctor. Ever since Mercy had shown her the video of Doctor Ware cheating on his wife Fareeha had lost respect for the doctor and she especially hated it when he touched her.

“This will be over soon. Just think, maybe we will get to train soon.” Mercy said as she took Fareeha's hand. As Mercy couldn't actually physically interact with Fareeha it was rare that mercy would touch Fareeha but Fareeha always liked it when she did and would find herself missing the AI's light touch once it was gone. The physical was over quickly and the doctor returned to his paper work.

“You can get dressed captain, I'm going to submit my report and clear you to commence training. Good luck with the Raptora program and your AI, I encourage you to come see me if you have any issues.”

Fareeha stood outside the armoury door. On the outside she looked calm and collected but on the inside, like Mercy she was nervous yet excited to finally begin training.

“let's do this.” Mercy said as they walked through the door. A group of engineers and scientists were there to greet them and quickly ushered them into a side room.

“It's good to finally meet you Captain. I am Doctor Dallaire and I will be leading and monitoring your training program. Shall we begin?” the doctor spoke with a rich French-Canadian accent that reminded Fareeha of her brief time with her father.

Fareeha never knew a speech about an experimental flying suit could be boring but doctor

Dallaire somehow managed it. While Fareeha tried to maintain her poise and look like she cared about what the doctor was saying, Mercy was free to act up. For an AI Mercy had a short attention span and it didn't help things that she had spent the past week studying everything the doctor was saying with Fareeha, so in an effort to make things interesting mercy decided that she wanted to make Fareeha laugh. The old standard of moving her arm though people had no effect on Fareeha nor did Mercy's mimicking of the doctors speech.

"What is it they say to do when you get nervous while giving a speech... imagine everyone in their underwear, right Fareeha?" Mercy saw Fareeha's eyes go wide in fear before she snapped her fingers. Mercy had always intended on using her ability to alter Fareeha's perception of reality for good but Fareeha had left her no choice.

"Is everything alright?" the doctor asked as Fareeha interrupted his speech with a coughing fit.

"I'll be fine doc, please continue." Fareeha wrote on a note pad for mercy to see.

NOT FUNNY MERCY. Mercy laughed and she knew Fareeha wouldn't stay mad at her.

"oh please, you're just mad that I didn't strip down too" she winked at Fareeha making her blush and caused the doctor to pause his talk once more.

"Are you sure you are alright Captain?"

"I'm fine. Actually Doctor I studied all this material last week, do you think we could move on?"

"uhh sure..." the doctor seemed surprised that for once a soldier had done their homework. "The suit won't be ready until tomorrow but we can put you in the playpen for today."

"the playpen?" mercy wondered out loud as Fareeha stood up and followed Dallaire down the hall.

The playpen was a large room in the back of the building. It contained a number of robotic arms, lights and other assorted robotics all connected to a chair in the centre of the room. Dallaire looked quite pleased with the setup but Fareeha couldn't help but feel unnerved by the one way mirror and the recording equipment.

"We set this room up so you can experience the neural link between yourself and your AI prior to putting the Raptora suit on. He motioned to a mesh hat that was connected to the chair. "This hood is the same one that is found in the helmet of the Raptora suit and is what allows the AI to interact with the suit and your own brainwaves. With this hood on you should be able to manipulate all the objects in the room much like you would the wings and jets of the suit. Would you like to get started?"

"Can we have some privacy Fareeha? I don't think I want all these people around when we try this for the first time." Mercy spoke softly and Fareeha noticed that there were a large number of people standing around watching her.

"I would like to do this in my own time Doctor, could I have the room and the recording equipment turned off?"

"of course Captain." He ushered his entourage out the door. "I'll have the others leave the observation room, I'll just be outside the door if you need anything." He shut the door behind him leaving Fareeha alone in the room.

"Sorry about that, this is going to get... intimate and I'd rather not do this with an audience."

Mercy appeared next to Fareeha as the door clicked shut.

"Don't worry about it, I understand. So what can we expect when I put that on?" Fareeha asked as she eyed the hood.

"I'm not entirely sure, no one had ever done this before. In theory I should be able to read your thoughts, both conscious and sub conscious." Fareeha wished that there had been more research done prior to putting Mercy into her head.

"This isn't going to hurt is it?" Fareeha asked as she sat in the chair examining the hood in her lap.

"I don't think so... even if there is some pain ill suppress it for you. Trust me this should be safe"

"alright, I trust you. Here goes nothing."

"I don't feel any different" Fareeha said once the hood was firmly secured on her head. "Do you

feel any different? Is this it?" Fareeha was slightly disappointed that she didn't feel anything. "Uhh Fareeha, you need to turn it on" Fareeha felt herself blush as mercy giggled at her mistake. "Right... sure, I know that." She was too embarrassed to ask where the power button was so it took a few seconds for Fareeha to find it.

The moment Fareeha hit the power button she felt a shiver course through her body, starting from her head down to her toes. Her eyes struggled to focus and she began to feel dizzy, she thought she was going to pass out.

"Mercy..." Fareeha rasped out barely staying conscious.

"I'm right here. Fareeha focus on me, focus on the sound of my voice" Mercy's angelic face appeared inches from Fareeha's own. "you are doing so well Fareeha, you can do this I believe in you." Fareeha struggled to stay awake but did as she was told. The more she focused on Mercy the stronger she felt until after a few minutes of Mercy's gentle encouragement Fareeha had fought off the worst of it.

"What was that?" Fareeha asked once she had regained some of her strength. She could feel her head throb and the occasional shiver would move through her body once more.

"That was me gaining access to your thoughts; I didn't know it would be that bad. I'm so sorry Fareeha, if I had known maybe I could have..."

"Mercy its fine, I'm alright. You didn't know, no one did." Fareeha interrupted Mercy's apology as the more she spoke to closer she sounded to tears. "How do you feel? Did it work or was that all for nothing?"

"I'm not sure, I think so. Try thinking instead of speaking to me."

"Mercy?" Fareeha felt like an idiot until she heard Mercy respond.

"It worked! I could read your thoughts! Think something else."

*"This is cool. Now I won't look like a crazy person talking to myself all the time."*

"Well it will only work like this with the suit on"

*oh right... so now what?* Fareeha looked around the room at the various pieces of equipment.

"We practice I guess. Try telling me to move that arm over there." Mercy pointed to one of the robotic arms.

*"Uhh... move that arm please?"* She felt Mercy lightly slap her shoulder.

"No not like that, tell me but without saying it." Fareeha shook her head in frustration. Now that she could read her thoughts mercy felt it too. "Fareeha we have been at it less than a minute, there is no need to be upset. We are literally the first people to ever attempt this, no one expects us to get it right away." Fareeha sighed, Mercy was right as always and her voice once again had a calming effect on her.

*You're right. Let's try again.* Mercy smiled at her and Fareeha felt herself blush.

"You did it!" Mercy exclaimed as Fareeha managed to make the arm move after almost an hour of trying. "Well done Fareeha, I'm so proud of you!" Mercy clapped and laughed with joy at Fareeha's achievement. Fareeha was not use to such praise, especially from an AI.

*"it was nothing really, you did all the work."* Mercy smiled at her sweetly as Fareeha attempted to shift the praise.

"It was a team effort. This is such good progress, now I know what brainwaves to look for it will only get easier from here. Eventually we will be completely in sync and you won't need to think about it" Fareeha could only hope it would get easier, if it took her an hour to move a robotic arm an inch how was she expected to fly a jet powered suit. "Fareeha don't worry about it, we'll get the hang of it." Fareeha felt the reassuring hand of Mercy rest on her shoulder.

*"oh right, you can hear what I'm thinking. Why don't we take a break?"*

"Good idea. Just hit the switch again, it shouldn't be as bad when we break connection... I think." Fareeha said a silent prayer as she hit the power button.

Fareeha didn't feel any different once the connection was broken, the only thing that changed was that she could no longer feel a buzz behind her eyes.

"Mercy?" Her AI had disappeared when she severed the connection but reappeared once she was

called.

“See? I told you, nothing to worry about” Mercy smiled brightly at Fareeha as she tried to untangle herself from the chair’s wires. “How about some lunch?”

The mess hall was quiet for a weekday and Fareeha assumed that a large operation must be underway. She was surprised at how hungry she felt as she reached the front of the line, she suspected that Mercy may have been suppressing her hunger for some time.

“Hey isn’t that part of your squad?” Mercy said as they looked out over the scattered groups of people sitting around the hall. The group noticed Fareeha and waved to her, she waved back before moving to sit at the back of the hall. “Don’t you want to sit with your friends?”

“not really, I’d rather sit somewhere quiet.” Fareeha whispered as she sat down.

“is something wrong Fareeha?” Mercy asked sounding worried.

“No nothing’s wrong, I just want to sit somewhere where I can talk to you.”

“Oh, ok. What did you want to talk about” Mercy said as she sat opposite Fareeha.

“Nothing in particular, just want to talk with you.” Fareeha said, not caring how it must look to be smiling and talking to a blank wall.

Fareeha collapsed onto her bed at the end of the day, she felt completely drained.

“I can’t believe how much progress we’ve made in only one day” Mercy said as she watched over her exhausted host. After lunch they had returned to the playpen and by the end of the day the pair were proficient at moving all the robotics in the room, even getting to the point where they had been able to play chess using two of the arms.

“Am I going to be this tired everyday?” Fareeha asked talking into her pillow.

“It will get easier Fareeha. Our connection is like a muscle, with use and training it will grow and become strong. Each day will be easier than the last.” Fareeha rolled over letting out a sigh, she was still dressed and she didn’t believe she would have the energy to get up let alone shower and dress for bed.

“I need a shower. Mercy could you give me a hand?”

“I... uhh... you want me to help you shower?” Mercy asked, Fareeha could detect a hint of embarrassment. Realising how her words could be interpreted she clarified.

“I mean can you make me less tired so I can get up.”

Mercy nervously laughed to herself. “oh right...”

“Captain excellent progress yesterday, you have far exceeded our expectations. The engineering team has been up all night putting the last finishing touches on the Raptora suit and I am happy to announce that it is ready for you to begin training with it.” Dallaire said as he unlocked the stand that held the Raptora suit. Although Fareeha had seen technical drawings of the suit she was still blown away by the magnificence of the suit. The suit was less bulky than she had expected and she was happy to see that the team had accepted her request to have the suit painted in a desert camo pattern.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” Mercy said as she bounced around the suit excitedly, the smile on her face matching Fareeha’s. Fareeha walked around the suit running her hand over the sculpted body and sharp wings, all designed with protection and aerodynamics in mind. It was a marvel of human engineering and military thinking.

“As you may have seen in the notes the tecs were worried about your ability to regulate your own body temperature while in the suit. To alleviate this concern we have created an under suit for you to wear.” He motioned for an engineer to step over, Fareeha now saw the he was carrying a large briefcase. The tech opened it and took a black body suit out.

“That looks a bit... tight. Is that latex?” Mercy said upon seeing the suit.

“This suit is made of advanced synthetics making it heat resistant and it also acts as a G-suit, please note that it provides no physical protection and if torn its effectiveness is reduced significantly. It is also very expensive so please don’t tear it.” The tech handed the suit to Fareeha and showed her the zip at the back before pointing her in the direction of the changing room.

"They can't expect me to wear this." Fareeha said looking in the mirror. The suit was far tighter than anticipated and being informed that she was not supposed to wear anything under it the suit left nothing to the imagination.

"That explains it" Mercy mused as she tried to stop herself staring at Fareeha.

"Explains what?"

"Why so many people appeared when the body suit was brought out." Fareeha felt an unpleasant shiver run down her spine as she remembered how many people would be waiting for her when she remerged.

"That's just what I need, a bunch of nerds staring at my ass" Fareeha was not looking forward to this.

"I don't think that will be the only thing they will be staring at." Mercy said in a provocative tone.

"Don't worry about it, you won't even know they're there." Fareeha gave mercy a questioning look. "Trust me" Mercy shot Fareeha a wink before disappearing. Fareeha made sure to avoid any mirrors to hide her blush.

Fareeha elected to stand tall and look as menacing as possible as she exited the changing room to face the awaiting masses. She was surprised to see that the expected crowd was nowhere to be seen and that only a few senior techs and Dr Dallaire remained standing by the Raptora suit. *Did Mercy do this? But how?* Fareeha's attention was ripped away from her inner thoughts as she saw the woman standing next to the doctor smiling brightly at her.

"Mercy..." she croaked out as Fareeha suddenly realised her mouth had gone bone dry and her cheeks were bright red. Mercy was wearing her own skin tight body suit that was as equally revealing as Fareeha's own. Fareeha's eyes roamed Mercy's body, unable to avoid lingering on her chest and the rest of her elegant body.

"I told you that you wouldn't notice them" Mercy's sultry voice whispered in her head as she blew a kiss before disappearing while the doctor turned to greet her.

"Ah excellent, let's get you suited up."

The Raptora suit was designed in such a way that the user would be able to easily put on each part without assistance however as it was the first time Fareeha had put on the suit two techs were on hand to walk her through the process. Fareeha listened intently as they explained the correct way to put on each part and in what order as to avoid damaging it. Some parts would take more effort than others to connect, in one instance requiring Fareeha to kick a wall to force a boot to connect with the shin plate, the tech only shook his head at the display and apologised reminding her that this was still a prototype and they would work on it tonight. Eventually all that remained was the helmet, Fareeha loved the way the polished visor shone in the light and was impressed by its strength as she knocked her knuckles against it.

"As you know the helmet contains the same technology as the hood in the playpen except this one is connected to the flight controls of the suit and not some simple robotic arms." Fareeha put the helmet on, she liked how it snugly secured her head yet remained comfortable. She tested her range of motion in the suit and her sight lines as the techs took notes.

"What happens if I lose my helmet, will I no longer be able to fly?"

"If your helmet becomes lost or damaged you will lose your connection to your AI and it will no longer be able to read your thoughts. Your AI will still be able to control the suit by its self as the AI has an backup method of connecting to the flight controls that does not require the helmet to be connected, the only thing that can break that connection is substantial damage to the suit or an EMP.

"So if Mercy has lost flight controls I'm probably fucked anyway."

"Basically" the tech shrugged his shoulders as he lead Fareeha out into the yard.

Fareeha looked around the training yard, she was impressed by the set up. The yard consisted of two parts, the first was a mock-up of an urban city block often used for close combat training, the second was a wide open space where she was currently being directed to.

"Now that you know how to put the suit on you have officially reached the extent of our



knowledge about the Raptora suit, normally we would give you an instructor to teach you how to operate it but seeing as we are at the forefront of this technology you will be flying solo so to speak. All your training sessions and telemetry will be recorded for both your and our review and a technician will up in the observation tower if you need assistance. So... good luck I guess."

Dallaire shook Fareeha's hand warmly before leaving her alone standing in the field.

*"Raptora one this is observation one, radio check."* The helmet radio crackled in Fareeha's ear.

*"Observation one this is Raptora reading you five"* Fareeha replied once she had found the transmit button much to Mercy's amusement.

*"We read you five also Raptora. You are cleared to begin your training, call us if you need anything. Observation one out"*

"Well now what" Fareeha said half to herself and half to Mercy. Mercy was no longer wearing the skin tight body suit and Fareeha had been forced to hide her disappointment.

"Well for starters maybe you should turn on the neural link."

"Oh right... and how do I do that?"

"The console on your wrist, the blue button" Fareeha laughed at herself once she saw the bright flashing blue button marked *AI Link*.

Fareeha still felt a shiver run through her body and was comforted when Mercy squeezed her hand giving her something to focus on.

*"I don't think I'll ever get used to that."*

"Great everything seems to be working. While I do some system checks I want to show you something I made for you" Mercy said as Fareeha began to feel the flight surfaces move on her back.

*"You made me something? Thanks that's so nice of you."*

"It was nothing really, I made it while you were asleep" Mercy said as she avoided Fareeha's eyes. "it's a HUD, it has a map, fuel and weapon stores, a compass, objective markers and it can even give you IFF information" she demonstrated as a blue outline appeared around herself and the other people in the yard.

*"Wow mercy, this is brilliant. Thank you"*

"I'm glad you like it, I can add or change it later if you want. It seems that the flight controls are working as they should, shall we?"

They started off small, Fareeha learnt how to move the control surfaces on the ground before they first took to the sky. Their first 'flight' consisted of a 3 foot hop straight up into the air followed by an undignified yelp from Fareeha and an even more embarrassing landing, Mercy hadn't helped things when she replayed the observation camera footage for Fareeha to watch.

"Come now my baby bird, dust yourself off and try again." Fareeha was caught off guard by Mercy's affectionate tone, Mercy knew just what to say to make her blush. Fareeha's second hop was more dignified and before long Fareeha was able to run and jump over tall obstacles using the jet pack.

*"Should we try it in reverse?"* Fareeha asked as she stood on the edge of one of the urban buildings that she had just jumped up.

"Are you sure? it's very high, you might hurt yourself"

*"I trust you"* Fareeha thought as she stepped off the edge. Fareeha felt the jets kick in before her head had dipped below the roof. She looked down expecting to see the ground coming up towards her but instead it remained where it was. Realising that she was hovering Fareeha reduced the power and floated softly to the ground.

"I wish you would tell me before you do stuff like that" Mercy chastised as Fareeha's boots hit solid ground.

*"What happened to you being able to read my mind"* Mercy responded with a huff before firing

one of the engines causing Fareeha to tip over.

Mercy stood over the fallen captain with a smirk, trying to contain her laughter as Fareeha struggled to get up.

*"You are so cruel to me, why did I get such a mean AI?"* Fareeha said trying to act serious but failing miserably as a smile slowly worked into her face.

"oh hush you know you love me" Mercy said sticking out her tongue. At the mention of the word love Fareeha froze and fell to the ground once more. "Fareeha are you alright? The neural link just broke." Mercy rushed to Fareeha side, not that she could physically do anything to help. Fareeha glanced down at her wrist panel and saw a rock had pressed the neural link button, she was secretly thankful that it had.

"I'm fine, a rock hit the button its nothing to worry about. Why don't we take a break and grab some food." Mercy still seemed concerned as Fareeha pulled herself up and took off the helmet. Fareeha loved the feeling as the wind moved through her hair and cooled her scalp but it did little to calm the thoughts racing through her mind.

Fareeha was perched on top of the communications tower, the tallest place on base. Ever since learning how to fly the Raptora suit it had become somewhat of a ritual for her to come up here and debrief after training with Mercy. Fareeha was happy how well her training had come along, in two short weeks she had gone from her embarrassing first hop to being able to fly and fight in the suit. Fareeha had also noticed a change in Mercy, ever since Mercy had jokingly said that Fareeha was in love with her Fareeha had begun to see a different side of her. Before Fareeha had seen Mercy as a close friend, someone she could rely on. Now she saw beyond that, she began to notice the small things Mercy would do for her like have her coffee brewed for her while she showered or the small compliments and comments that ever so slightly drifted from friendly to flirty. Fareeha saw changes in her own behaviour, she became embarrassed and flustered easily whenever Mercy spoke and that feeling she felt in the pit of her stomach when Mercy laughed must mean something. The more she thought about it the clearer it became, she did want more than just friendship and that terrified her. *What if she doesn't like me that way? If I tell her and she says no there is no way I can avoid her she is literally in my head. Is she even capable of romantic relationship? I mean is that something they coded her to do, the manual didn't say anything about AI's and love.*

"Earth to Fareeha" Mercy's soft voice shook Fareeha from the whirling in her mind. "You seem distracted, is everything alright?" Mercy's concern for Fareeha's wellbeing only made things worse for Fareeha.

"I'm fine, just a lot on my mind is all." Mercy was the last person she wanted to talk about this. Her stomach leapt when Mercy put a reassuring hand on hers.

"You know you can always talk to me... is this about the evaluation?" the high ranking officials that oversaw the Raptora program would be coming down tomorrow so they could evaluate the Raptora's combat effectiveness. Fareeha was thankful that Mercy had inadvertently given her an out.

"Yeah, it just seems so sudden. We've only been at this two weeks and I just don't think I'm ready, I don't want them to see me mess up and can the whole thing." The turning in Fareeha's stomach returned in full force as she felt Angela's hand cup her face, Fareeha instinctively lent into the imaginary touch and turned to face Mercy. Fareeha felt herself falling into mercy's big crystal blue eyes as she spoke.

"Fareeha we are a team, we have been from the beginning. You shouldn't feel that our success or failure is riding on your shoulders alone, it is a burden that we both share. You know deep down that we can do this, look how far we have come. I can anticipate your every move out there just like you can with me. Even if we don't meet their expectations all they will do is give us more time." Fareeha wished she shared Mercy's optimism.

"But what if they don't? What if they scrub the whole thing and shut down the program? What if they..." Fareeha caught herself from saying too much and reluctantly tore her eyes from Mercy's. "I think we should call it a day." She said putting her helmet back on, she didn't activate the

neural link and trusted Mercy to fly them down by herself.

Fareeha lay on her bed listening to the soft music Mercy was playing for her. Mercy had the ability to make Fareeha fall asleep but Fareeha preferred the natural method, although on some nights Mercy would help things along with Fareeha noticing.

“Fareeha?” Fareeha opened one eye and watched as Mercy appeared, sitting on the side of her bed next to her dressed in a loose top and shorts.

“hmm?” Fareeha tried to hide that familiar feeling that was growing more formidable every time she saw Mercy.

“I was wondering if I could run something by you.” Fareeha sat up, she could tell this was something important.

“anything”

“I would like to get in contact with one of the members of the science team that created me.”

“Of course you can. Is something the matter? We can go to them right now if its urgent.” Fareeha was about to get out of bed and run to the scientist if need be before Mercy stopped her with a gentle hand and soft smile.

“Calm down its nothing to worry about, get back in bed. I wanted to email Dr Tekhartha Zenyatta.” Fareeha recognised the name but couldn’t remember what area he was in. “I’ve been looking over my code and noticed some anomalies” Fareeha felt panic course though her when she heard that Mercy may be sick or in trouble but once again Mercy calmed her down with little more than a smile and a gentle squeeze of her hand. “it’s nothing really, just some changes I don’t quite understand. I wanted to talk to him as they are his lines of code and I’m hoping he will be able to explain their use and why they are there. They seem... superfluous to my intended function.” Fareeha didn’t understand the first thing about coding but would do anything to help Mercy.

“of course you can contact him, you don’t need to ask me stuff like that. But I am glad you told me and you trust me enough to tell me. Is there anything you need me to do?” Mercy let out a small laugh.

“Actually there is, I was making myself an email account but I can’t do it on my own, there’s a... there’s a captcha and I can’t fill it out.”

*“Captain Amari, Doctor Dallaire here. Your assessment will proceed as follows; you will engage the targets as they appear in the open ground, then you will clear the city block of targets while avoiding any hazards or threats you come across. Finally you destroy the drone flying above you which is currently in a holding pattern at 8,000 feet. Proceed when ready.”*

Fareeha swore under her breath when she heard her final instruction, the highest they had ever been was 3,000 feet and they hadn’t engaged a target at that altitude.

“Language!” Mercy teased. “We can do this Fareeha, just like we practised” Fareeha took a deep breath before leaping to the sky.

The first targets fell easily thanks to Mercy’s HUD and Fareeha’s aim, the rocket launcher in Fareeha’s hand sung as each target fell. She reloaded as she flew towards the city block, staying high as Mercy marked each target. The targets were scatted this time, hiding in windows and doorways.

“We need to get low.” Mercy reacted in an instant dropping them down to street level, weaving between buildings and burnt out cars as Fareeha destroyed each target with surgical precision. Fareeha was rapidly approaching the last target, she launched her last rocket that flew straight into the building the cardboard terrorist was cowering in. The resulting explosion sent bricks and debris into the air which harmlessly bounced off the suits metal plating as she flew though the dust cloud on her climb to the final target.

The world seemed more peaceful as she climbed towards the circling drone.

“It’s beautiful” Mercy said what Fareeha was thinking as they glanced at all they could see as they

passed 6,500 feet. Fareeha spotted the drone at 7,000 feet, she needed to be closer to get a clean shot but the engines were reaching their max operating altitude.

*Come on... come on!* Fareeha lined up the shot.

“Fareeha, look out!” Mercy called as Fareeha fired at the drone. The drone wasn’t going to go down without a fight and Fareeha spotted the tell tail smoke trail of an incoming missile. Fareeha turned as hard as she could pulling almost 9G as she attempted to shake the oncoming projectile. Fareeha had never trained for this situation but she didn’t have time to panic. The Raptora suit wasn’t fitted with a countermeasure system but Fareeha did have an emergency flare gun. With the missile almost upon her Fareeha took the flare gun from its chest pocket and fired it behind her before cutting her engines and diving down. Fareeha’s eyes were fixed on the missile as it continued on its path towards her before suddenly altering course towards the flare. Fareeha cheered as the missile flew past the flare and with the rocket motor burn out it no longer posed a threat.

“Nice thinking” Mercy said as they commenced their descent.

Fareeha could feel her heartbeat in her ears as she finally landed in front of the waiting crowd of scientists and generals. Fareeha remained stoic her face not displaying any emotion as she saluted the crowd with the wind in her hair, on the inside however both Mercy and herself were jumping for joy and congratulating each other on a job well done. Fareeha was expecting a long winded speech from the visiting generals or at least some acknowledgment of any kind. What she received was nothing at all as the most senior official walked away, pausing only to whisper in Dr Dallaire’s ear before leaving the field entirely.

“Fareeha what just happened? Did I do something wrong?” Fareeha’s heart almost broke when Mercy instantly assumed that this was somehow her fault.

“Don’t think like that, you were perfect like you always are. It was me, I should have...” she paused as the doctor walked over to her. Mercy appeared next to Fareeha holding her hand tight in anticipation.

“I was most impressed with your performance captain, an excellent display. Although I argued against it the generals have informed me that you are to be transferred to active duty immediately.” Mercy squealed in delight at the news wrapping her arms around Fareeha’s neck and pulling her into a hug, Fareeha wanted nothing more in the world than to be able to wrap her arms around the girl that hung off her neck. “You will be given the weekend off and you will receive your orders Monday. Congratulations Captain, you’ve done us proud.” Fareeha had never felt more pride than when she shook the doctor’s hand as Mercy whispered praise in her ear.

“We should celebrate!” Mercy said as she pranced around Fareeha as she took off the Raptora suit. Fareeha raised an eye brow as she glanced up, Mercy had changed into her skin tight body suit claiming it was a ‘special occasion’.

“What did you have in mind?” Fareeha asked hoping Mercy hadn’t noticed she was staring.

“I don’t know, what do people usually do when they want to celibate?” despite being an advanced AI Mercy was surprisingly ignorant.

“Well my old squad would go out to a bar or club after a successful mission to blow off some steam.”

“That sounds like fun, let’s do that” Fareeha couldn’t see why the AI would want to visit a bar but a night out did sound nice, especially with Mercy.

Fareeha never went out without her squad so it felt strange for her to be standing outside the bar dressed up for a night out without anyone with her, anyone except for Mercy.

“This looks nice.” Mercy said remarking on the bar’s exterior. This was one of Fareeha’s favourite places to go and she had good, a bit foggy memories of nights spent here. The bar wasn’t too busy as they entered, it was still early but there was already a smattering of young soldiers about the place. “So now what do we do?” Mercy asked as they looked over the bar.

“Now we get a drink... well I do at least. Are you affected by alcohol?” Fareeha whispered as she approached a bartender.

“Not sure, but I look forward to finding out.” Mercy’s excitement was contagious and Fareeha felt like a fool as she was ginning like an idiot as she ordered her drink. Fareeha quickly retreated to one of the dark and lonely corners with her drink, if she was going to look like a dork she wanted as few people to see her as possible. “So now what?” Mercy asked she Fareeha took a seat. “Well normally the rest of the guys go off and hit on anything with a pulse while the rest sit around and chat.”

“oh, and which did you do? I remember some of your squad talking about your... conquests” Fareeha almost spilt her drink, she knew she was bright red. “Why don’t you go talk to her? She looks nice.” Mercy pointed to an admittedly beautiful woman sitting at the bar. Had Fareeha seen her a month ago she undoubtedly would have gone an talked to her and likely been successful in bring her home, but things had changed.

“Maybe later. I’d rather just sit here and talk for a change.” Mercy seemed satisfied and flopped down next to her.

“Ok. How is your drink?”

Fareeha and mercy spent the rest of the evening at the bar. Occasionally someone would look over and see the captain seemingly talking to herself but Fareeha paid their quizzical looks no mind, she was too enamoured with Mercy’s company. They quickly learnt that alcohol had no direct impact on Mercy but she did get to share in the pleasant buzz that Fareeha had developed.

“Fareeha, why wouldn’t you go talk to that woman?” Mercy asked as Fareeha begun her 4<sup>th</sup> drink. Fareeha felt her embarrassment return once more.

“I uhh.. I told you... I just didn’t want to.” Even Fareeha didn’t believe what she was saying.

“Are you worried it would be awkward because I’m here?” Mercy slid up to Fareeha, their bodies almost touching. “I wouldn’t mind, I know humans occasionally need a... release” Fareeha stood up abruptly.

“I just don’t want to ok. Let’s just go.” Mercy could tell she had gone too far, she had only been trying to support Fareeha, she could tell something had been eating away at her lately.

Fareeha staggered home in silence. She wasn’t upset at Mercy, she knew Mercy didn’t know any better and was just trying to help. She was upset at herself, for snapping at her but also because she refused to admit the true reason to both Mercy and herself.

Fareeha collapsed onto her bed and kicked off her shoes, she couldn’t bother to get changed for bed electing to just take off her pants and jacket. Fareeha could tell Mercy was hurt by her actions, she had disappeared since they left the bar and had made no attempt to speak.

“I’m sorry” Fareeha whispered into the darkness as she lay on her side. She was thankful when Mercy appeared sitting on the edge of the bed, looking at her expectantly. “I was rude and it was uncalled for, I’m sorry. I know you were only trying to be helpful.” Mercy slowly nodded her head before laying down next to her looking deep into Fareeha’s eyes.

“I’m sorry for trying to push you to do something you didn’t want to.” Fareeha saw strand of hair had fallen onto Mercy’s face, she wanted nothing more than to be able to reach out and touch her. They lay together for some time, Mercy slowly rubbing her thumb on the back of Fareeha’s hand.

*How can I tell her the truth if i'm not even sure if she is capable of the same?*

“I wish you were really here” Fareeha whispered, not caring that tears were welling up in her eyes. Mercy’s sadly nodded before tenderly cupping Fareeha’s cheek.

“I do too.”

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Dear Dr Zenyatta

I know it is against protocol for me to contact you directly but I feel that there is no other way.

You worked on the Valkyrie program in the final weeks of development and made significant structural changes to my base code in your short time there. Recently I have been reviewing my code and I have noticed some anomalies that I do not understand. In the attachment that accompanies this email I have highlighted the areas that I do not understand.

I have a rough understanding of their function however I do not understand why they were included. From what I can gather they do not seem to be in line with my intended purpose. More so if this line of code was to be run and the negative end state were to occur (marked in red) it would seem that it would have a negative impact on my wellbeing and performance in the field.

A logical mind would say that this code should be avoided in its entirety however if that is the case then why was it included in the first place?

I write to you now as while previously I have been attempting to avoid beginning down this path it seems that I am unable to avoid it and I fear where it may lead. I have already noticed that it has affected my behaviour and has begun to cause me great uncertainty and anguish.

I look forward to your explanation of this matter.

Valkyrie Program AI No. 1  
Mercy

## IV

### Chapter Notes

Sorry about the wait

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Subject: Captain Amari Medical Report  
To: Overseers of Project Raptora

As requested prior to Captain Amari participating in OPERATION SAND FLY I undertook another medical examination and physical review, the details of which have been attached. It is in my professional medical opinion that Amari is in peak physical performance and is more than capable to undertake this mission.

However I have serious concerns about her psychological state. As you are well aware upon selecting Amari for the Raptora program we begun monitoring her so we would have a baseline reading of her behaviour and psychological state prior to the introduction of her AI companion. We noted that Amari had a number of close friends and was almost always seen sharing meals or participating in off base activities with them. Since the introduction of her AI we have seen a shift in the captain's behaviour. Both observation and interviews with her friends has found that the captain no longer spends time with them, preferring to eat and spend time alone. Her friends have confirmed that this is very unlike her and despite their efforts Amari does not seem interested in re-joining their group. The few times she has spent time with her former comrades has she has been quiet and withdrawn.

We believe that the cause of this withdrawal from society is due to the introduction of her AI. It is possible that the AI though influence or psychological manipulation that Amari has become or is becoming subject to her AI's will. I have personally noted that Amari has taken to using the AI's name 'Mercy' in regular speech and though consultation with Doctor Dallaire we found that the captain would often request privacy during her training sessions perhaps following the direction of her AI. The use of the neural link has likely sped up this process of manipulation.

While I am currently unable to determine the AI's motives for this manipulation I must strongly suggest that Captain Amari and her AI be separated immediately. It is possible that the AI may act violently if an attempt to remove it is detected and with the ability to alter the host's perception of reality care must be taken to immobilise the Captain quickly.

AI manipulation of the host was always a possibility but we never expected it to occur so quickly. If it is confirmed I recommend transferring resources to the Sigrún project.

I must once again strongly urge you not to allow Captain Amari on this mission as it may have unforeseen consequences.

Dr Ware Project Valkyrie Lead

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Fareeha was bumped and jostled in the back of the cramped armoured personal carrier, this was

not the place for a flying suit. The noise was deafening and the strong smell of diesel had given her a headache, this combined with the stifling heat made this cramped box a living hell. Fareeha had been part of a reconnaissance team prior to joining the Raptroa program, she wanted trade it all back to be out of this hell on treads and to be back in her open top jeep.

The mission was simple, protect an aid shipment as it was delivered to a remote desert village. Fareeha has assumed that she would be flying over the six vehicle convoy providing air cover, instead she was stuck in this tin can.

"This is ridiculous" Fareeha said after she hit her head on the roof for the third time. "I get that Raptroa is top secret but this is going too far." Mercy appeared before her, radiant as ever.

"Perhaps you should put your helmet on if you are going to keep bumping your head." Mercy said sweetly. Fareeha was about to respond when another knock sent her flying into the roof. Mercy's laugh dulled the pain somewhat as Fareeha put her helmet on. "oh come now don't pout" Mercy's sweet voice penetrated Fareeha's body like a breath of fresh air. Fareeha no longer fought the butterflies that inhabited her stomach whenever she spoke to Mercy but she was still frustrated by her ignorance as to if it was even possible that Mercy could like her the way she liked her.

"We must be close to the village by now." Fareeha said looking out one of the gun ports, she was beginning to see huts indicating they were close.

"So I got a response from Dr Zenyatta before we left." Mercy said as she fidgeted with the hem of her shirt.

"You did? What did he say? Were the anomalies an issue?" Fareeha had been worried since Mercy had bought the issue up and her secrecy about the problem had left Fareeha feeling helpless. Mercy moved to the other side of the cabin, gently placing her hand on Fareeha's. She was about to speak when an explosion rocked the APC sending Fareeha to the floor.

Fareeha was up in an instant, she reached for her weapon before shoving the rear door to the APC open.

"*Dismount, Dismount! Contact right*" the radio crackled as each squad began to sound off and start engaging this unknown force. Fareeha hit the neural link and leapt into the sky.

The moment the link was established Mercy went to work. While assisting with the flight controls she began to search for the targets that were engaging the convoy. Drawing from multiple video feeds consisting of the convoy guards head cameras she began to paint a picture of the situation. The convoy had been ambushed on the single road into the village. The road ran in a north south direction and the village was only 200m away to the north, they had gotten so close. The river to the west protected their flank leaving the right the only direction they needed to worry about. As she analysed the camera feeds she marked each muzzle flash she spotted, in the first few seconds she had identified 20 armed assailants on the sand dune that overlooked the road. With no cover or concealment from the air they were sitting ducks for Fareeha.

As Fareeha rose red contact markers appeared on her HUD, *good job mercy* she thought as she flew up higher to get a better angle on them.

"*What the fuck is that thing?*" one soldier asked over the radio as Fareeha flew up from the convoy before she started to engage the targets below.

"*its on our side, just keep shooting*" the commander replied.

Fareeha was in her element raining death from above. The attackers didn't know what hit them as rockets landed amongst them. Fareeha had only launched one clip before they began to run towards the village. It was a hopeless effort and some threw down their weapons as they attempted to flee what could only be described as an angel of death.

"You don't need to kill them" Mercy's angelic voice shook Fareeha from her focus and brought a pause to the carnage. Fareeha surveyed her work, in less than a minute eight mangled bodies lay on the sand dune, some crying out in pain calling to their fleeing comrades. The lead vehicle of the convoy had been hit by a rocket, the lead APC had lost its track but Fareeha saw all occupants



were shaken but unharmed.

*“Convoy this is Pharah. The attackers are fleeing towards the village I am moving to intercept.”* Fareeha didn’t hear the response as a hail of gunfire erupted from the village. The target of the storm was her, flying exposed above the convoy. As bullets cracked around her she dove down towards the trees that lined the river.

“Thank god they are such bad shots” Fareeha said as she tried to catch her breath in the cover of the trees.

“Actually they hit you 4 times.” Mercy appeared pointing to the dents in Fareeha’s armour, she had been hit square in the chest and had three scrapes on her legs. Fareeha ran a hand over her chest plate that had saved her life.

“Am I alright?” she asked still examining the dent.

“You will be sore tomorrow if that’s what you are asking. I’ll suppress your pain but please, be careful... for me” The concern was evident in Mercy’s voice as she cupped Fareeha’s cheek.

*“Pharah this is lead, come in. Is everything alright?”* Fareeha resisted the urge to shut the radio off and remain the cool shade of the trees with Mercy but as the battle raged beyond the trees she knew she had a job to do.

“Lead this is Pharah. I took some minor hits but I’m ok. Can you identify where the fire is coming from?”

*“The fire is coming from inside the village. Break break. Vic 1, Vic 2 move into position to get fire into that village.”* Fareeha felt the APCs move past, the ground shook as their cannons began to decimate the buildings on the outskirts of the village.

“What about all the people that live there?” Mercy asked as they watched the APCs go to work. Mercy knew as well as Fareeha that the civilians were often forced to hide in the homes that the insurgents used as firing positions. Fareeha also knew that the commander knew this yet did nothing to avoid causing collateral damage, no one cared about the people they were supposedly trying to help.

*“Pharah, get eyes on the North side of the village and let us know if they try to run as we move into town.”* Fareeha took to the skies and flew over the village. Fires had started in the houses that the APCs had engaged so Fareeha was forced to fly around the thick plumes of black smoke.

“We ought to report him, he knew that civilians could be in there. How can you work for a company that allows people like that to have command roles?” Mercy spoke with an anger Fareeha had never felt before.

Once Fareeha would have tried to defend her superior’s actions, *we didn’t see what he did or it was within the ROE.* “I don’t know” was all she could muster as she watched people fleeing the approaching ‘aid’ convoy.

Fareeha was unable to spot the people that had shot at her and her comrades as she flew a wide orbit around the town, she dare not go any closer until the troops on the ground had begun to clear the buildings.

*“All elements be advised, we had found arms caches within the village. An informant as told us that up to fifty insurgents arrived in the town yesterday so keep your eyes open. Pharah what can you see from up there?”*

*“No one has been spotted trying to enter or leave town sir”* a large group of people had gathered in the centre of town around the aid vehicles.

Fareeha had been focused on the ongoing distribution of aid when Mercy spoke to her. “Look left... there was a vehicle, by that building there.” Mercy pinged the location on Fareeha’s hud, she saw an old flatbed truck with a tarp covering whatever was loaded on the back.

“Was that there before?” Fareeha moved closer to get a better look.

“No! Wait!” Mercy’s calls were too late as Fareeha watched with wide eyes as two men quickly removed the tarp to reveal an anti-air gun.

The sky around Fareeha was quickly filled with tracers as she tried to break line of sight but it was no use, a shell burst close to her sending shrapnel into her suit.

“No NO NO! Fuck!” Fareeha yelled as she tried to regain control of her suit as the left wing and engine fell away. It was hopeless and as the ground rushed up to meet her all she could pray for was “Mercy...”

Mercy’s world went black as Fareeha slammed into the building. Although she could not see she could feel everything as Fareeha’s body went through the mud brick roof. Fareeha came to a halt with a sickening crunch as she hit the ground floor of the building. Mercy had been working on autopilot since the moment Fareeha had been knocked out.

*Ok, Vitals? Heart rate good... breathing good...* Mercy begun working from top to bottom checking Fareeha’s body.

*Head hurts, well that’s to be expected... arms ok... broken rib, maybe two... legs fine... well done Dallaire your suit did its job.* It really was a miracle that after such an impact Fareeha had come away from it with only minor injuries.

Mercy begun to hear the sounds of battle raging outside, shooting and screams could be heard as the Helix soldiers fired back at those that had shot them down. Realising that Fareeha was not out of danger a second program triggered, one she was hoping to avoid.

*If you can still hear me in there, I’m sorry Fareeha.*

The tingling begun in Fareeha’s fingers and toes and quickly spread up towards her head, Mercy was thankful that Fareeha was unconscious for this as her taking control over Fareeha’s body was a painful process. The tingling grew into a full body burn, beyond what Mercy was capable of suppressing until it stopped suddenly.

Mercy slowly opened Fareeha’s eyes, taking in her soundings. They had fallen into someone’s sparsely furnished home and had created a Fareeha sized skylight in their living room. Like a new born calf mercy awkwardly managed to get Fareeha on her feet.

*This is too weird* Mercy thought as watched Fareeha’s hands as she balled them up into a fist before opening them. The sound of the radio frightened her as she instinctively looked around the room for the source.

*“Pharah what is your status? Does anyone have eyes on where it went down?”*

“This is... uh... Pharah. Im alright, I’m in a living room” Mercy was startled when the voice that she heard was not her own but Fareeha’s.

*“Alright stay put and launch a flare, we’ll come find you”* Mercy did as she was told and launched the flare though the hole in the roof. *“We see it, hang tight”*. With nothing to do but wait Mercy sat down on the pile of rubble they had created and listened to the sounds of battle outside.

Mercy was listing to the radio, hearing the voices of the convoy as they tried to exit the town and get towards Mercy and Fareeha’s position. A young soldier who was driving one of the APCs was panicking, his calls becoming less professional with each report. The shaky voice had an odd familiarity to it that Mercy couldn’t place. The smell of sulphur filled her senses as she begun to hear people singing, *is that happy birthday?* Mercy’s head ached forcing her eyes shut. When she reopened them she was suddenly standing over a teenage child as he blew out the candles on his cake.

“Happy birthday” she said as she handed over her present before leaning in close. “Don’t show your mother”

“Thanks Reeha!” the boy smiled up at her as the vision ended.

Mercy couldn’t be sure that the soldier on the radio was the same one in her vision, it was likely that they only sounded alike and that had been what caused it. Mercy knew memory bleed was a

possibility when she took control of Fareeha's body but she never expected it to happen so soon and to be so real. There was no danger to these visions however Mercy still feared what she might see.

Mercy cleared her mind while she waited, hoping to avoid triggering another vision. She didn't need to wait long as soon she heard the convoy pull up out front and people calling for 'Pharah'. Mercy emerged timidly from the house waving them down, before being rushed into the back of a truck.

"Where are you hurt?" a medic asked as he pondered how best to work on a patient in an armoured suit.

"Faree... I mean I have two broken ribs, some cuts and a concussion." The medic seemed sceptical as Mercy listed off Fareeha's injuries despite not outwardly showing any pain or discomfort. "I think" Mercy tried to play it cool but failed miserably.

"uh... sure... alright how do we get this off you?"

It had taken both the medic and two assistances almost 20 minutes to take off the crushed body plate and legs. They had tried to take off the helmet however had backed down after Mercy had threatened to attack them if they tried, she wouldn't risk a disconnection so she would wait for Fareeha to wake up and take over herself. The drive out of the village had been hectic, the convoy had been forced to manoeuvre around a series of road blocks and burning cars. They had also stopped on the road out of town to transfer the wounded into the truck Mercy and Fareeha were in and also to destroy their stricken APC that was damaged in the initial ambush. With nothing left to do Mercy watched as the medic worked on his patients, Mercy on more than one occasion had to bite her tongue as she watched him apply a substandard bandage or not have enough morphine on hand, for a highly paid security company the field medical staff had very few supplies. The medic's bedside manner was also left to be desired consisting of puns and bad joke, still it got a few laughs out of some of the less wounded soldiers.

"Doc your jokes are terrible. Didn't you take an oath to do no harm? Have mercy on us." A soldier called from the back.

Mercy's vision was once again blinded by a searing white light forcing her to shut them in pain. She was in a familiar hospital room lying in bed. Before her was herself, as she looked down she realised she looking through Fareeha's eyes. To see she own body smiling so sweetly at her was a strange feeling but there was more to it, something below the surface. Mercy blinked and was taken to the dog training centre watching as she laughed happily with the puppies, that same strange feeling in the pit of her stomach. Another blink and another vision, this time sitting on top of the communications tower the day before their evaluation. Mercy remembered that day, Fareeha had been distracted as they sat looking over the base. As they looked out Fareeha turned to glance at Mercy sitting next to her. Suddenly Mercy heard Fareeha's inner thoughts as though Fareeha's eyes she looked at her own smiling face, that feeling in her stomach hitting a crescendo. This has to mean something Fareeha's voice echoed. *What if she doesn't like me that way?* Mercy didn't understand, Fareeha knew they were friends, why would she be worried? *If I tell her and she says no, there is no way I can avoid her she is literally in my head.*

"I don't understand Fareeha, what are you taking about" Mercy wished Fareeha would wake up and answer her questions as she continued to listen to Fareeha's inner thoughts.

*Is she even capable of romantic relationship?* "What? Why would you need to know that unless..."

The vision was over as quickly as it begun and Mercy was once again in the back of the truck as it pulled in to the Helix base.

Only one chapter to go! im so glad everyone as stuck with me so far and I love reading your comments.

Not to spoil anything but the rating and tags are likely to change for the final chapter but i'm not 100% sure yet, just keep an eye out.

## Chapter Notes

Oh boy that took a while didn't it? sorry about the delay uni has been talking over my life recently. Who knew Native title and the Mabo decision was so complex (spoiler: everyone who started their essays a week before me did).

So I updated the tags so I could include the most poorly written smut possible.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“This is starting to become a bad habit” Fareeha groaned as she opened her eyes only to have them blinded by the bright hospital lights. Fareeha once again found herself in one of Helix Security’s hospital beds no knowing how she got there. She tried to sit up but she immediately regretted it as a sharp pain in her chest left her gasping for air.

“Sorry, I should have warned you about that.” Mercy smiled apologetically at Fareeha from the end of the bed.

“Mercy? What happened?” Fareeha tried to sit up once more but slower and with Mercy’s assistance.

“We were shot down” Mercy said slowly placing her hand on Fareeha’s. “You were knocked out when we hit the ground” Mercy’s words made sense but Fareeha felt that Mercy was hiding something from her.

“Mercy, what happened?” Fareeha spoke softly as to not spook her, she wasn’t angry she just wanted to know the whole story.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t want to but it just happened” Mercy broke down into tears throwing herself into Fareeha’s arms. Fareeha tried to return the embrace but found herself disappointed as her arms passed though Mercy’s body. “I didn’t have a choice. It was automatic, I didn’t want to take control” Mercy wept into Fareeha’s chest, if it wasn’t for the tears it might have been a pleasant experience.

“Mercy, did you take control of my body? Is that how I got here?” Mercy nodded slowly, tears continued to fall from her eyes. “Mercy, you have nothing to apologise for” Mercy looked at her with surprise.

“You’re not upset?” Mercy’s voice was not as timid as it had once been. Fareeha laughed and shook her head.

“Of course I’m not upset. You were designed to do that, it’s not like you had a choice. Besides I’d probably still be in that town if it wasn’t for you.” Mercy wiped the tears from her eyes as she sat up, a smile returning to her face.

There was a knock at Fareeha’s hospital room door but before she could answer it Dr Ware came in.

“Ah Captain you’re awake, excellent.” The doctor was all smiles seeming not to notice Fareeha’s displeasure at his arrival.

“Hello Doctor”

“How do you feel Captain? Any pain or nausea?” he said as he shone a pen light into each one of Fareeha’s eyes.

“No pain, I feel fine. I think Mercy might be suppressing it” she said as she shook free of the doctor. She glanced over at Mercy who nodded that she was suppressing some of her pain.

“Ah, how kind of her” he wrote some notes in his clipboard much to Fareeha’s annoyance. “Now as you were brought in unconscious we did some scans.” Fareeha looked over at Mercy looking

for an explanation.

“I’ll explain later”

“The results are back and it’s not good news I’m afraid. The harness that connects your AI to your brain has 4 contact points, it seems that during the crash one was knocked loose. Your AI only need two to function so there is no immediate danger however we would like to get it reconnected as soon as possible. Obviously this will require brain surgery but as you have just suffered a concussion we have been forced to postpone it until Thursday.” Fareeha looked at the scan pretending to understand what the doctor was talking about as he begun to explain the procedure.

Fareeha was saved from the doctor’s boring technical explanation of the surgery by a nurse who needed the doctors signature.

“Fareeha can you take a closer look at your scan?” Mercy asked once the doctor had left the room, Fareeha could hear him talking to someone in the hall but she didn’t recognize the voice. “Weird” Mercy said as she studied the scan. “That connector is still attached, its only one edge that’s come up.” Fareeha looked closely and saw that Mercy was right, only a small edge section of the circular pad had moved off her brain.

“Is that not a problem?” Fareeha asked, she had never fully understood how the AI unit was connected to her brain.

“Not really. The pad is only there to protect the metal conductor which is still firmly attached, why would they want to do surgery to fix such a non-issue?” Fareeha was unable to respond as doctor Ware came back into the room.

“Ah there it is!” he said taking the scan from Fareeha. “I’ll have a nurse come in and discharge you. If you have any issues come see me, if not I’ll see you on Thursday.” Fareeha shook his hand before he made to leave. He paused at the door and turned back towards Fareeha. “By the way, we’ve cancelled your leave until the surgery.”

It had been almost an hour since the Doctor had left yet Fareeha was still in her bed waiting for this supposed nurse to arrive and discharge her. She was beginning to lose hope when finally there was a knock at her door.

“It’s a about time” Mercy muttered as Fareeha called for them to come in. Instead of a nurse come to save Fareeha from this boring hospital bed it was Doctor Dallaire.

“Ah captain I was hoping to catch you before you left, how are you?” Fareeha did her best to hide her disappointment but she liked the doctor so she was willing to talk with him as she waited to be discharged.

“I’m in good shape all things considered. I am sorry about the suit” The Doctor laughed and sat on the edge of her bed.

“Don’t worry about it captain, the suit did its job in keeping you alive. That’s actually why I’m here, would it be alright if I came to your quarters later tonight? The engineering team would like some feedback on how the suit preformed in a combat environment so we can make changes for the mark two suit.”

“Oh, if you want to debrief I can come by your office tomorrow” Fareeha really didn’t want to spend her evening going over technical drawings and flight data, she just wanted to go back to her room and rest.

“I’m sorry captain but these are time sensitive changes so I really must insist, I’m sure that you have better things to be doing with your Sunday evening so I promise it won’t take long”

“What could be so important that it can’t wait until Monday morning?” Mercy asked as she crossed her arms and frowned at the doctor.

Fareeha relented, “alright if it’s that important. I’m not sure when I’ll be getting out of here but if you swing by at eight I should be free to talk” the doctor breathed a sigh of relief.

“Thankyou captain, I know I’m inconveniencing you...”

“You can say that again” Mercy mumbled.

“But I assure you that this is very important” both Fareeha and Dallaire looked up at the newly arrived nurse who was waiting in the door way with Fareeha’s discharge papers. “I think it would be best if we kept our meeting just between us” he whispered before getting up and leaving with

haste.

"I know I hit my head but are people acting weird?" Fareeha whispered as the nurse entered the room. Mercy nodded silently in agreement.

Once Fareeha had finally been discharged she retired to her room, although she didn't feel it. Mercy said she was in dire need of some rest. After a long shower to scrub the smell of battle and hospital disinfectant from her body she lay on her bed resting her eyes as she waited for doctor Dallaire.

"So what was it like to take control of my body?" Fareeha asked as she tried to stay awake, rolling onto her side to face Mercy who was lying next to her. Mercy did the same and Fareeha quickly found herself becoming lost in Mercy's crystal blue eyes.

"I didn't like it" Fareeha could see the sadness in Mercy's eyes. "It was nice to have control over my life for once but it wasn't worth the price I had to pay, it wasn't worth you getting hurt" Fareeha once again felt helpless as she saw tears welling up in Mercy's eyes.

"Hey now, no tears" Fareeha froze as Mercy tucked herself under her chin, Mercy's arms wrapping around her. "I'm right here" Fareeha whispered once Mercy had settled into her embrace.

Mercy disappeared from Fareeha's arms leaving her clutching at a pillow when they heard the knock at Fareeha's door.

"That's doctor Dallaire... I just need a moment" Mercy said as Fareeha got up to answer the door.

"Captain, thank you for... is everything alright?" Dallaire's tone changed once he got a good look at Fareeha's face. Fareeha wiped her watery eyes with the back of her hand.

"Everything is fine doctor, please come in" The doctor looked down the empty hall before stepping into the room clutching a folder to his chest protectively.

"This is just something from the rest of the engineering team" he fished around his folder eventually handing Fareeha a get well soon card with a baby duck on the front.

"Oh... Thank you" Dallaire looked at Fareeha expectantly as she opened the card. The card had only four words written in it, *Is your room bugged?*

Fareeha froze as she read question, why would her room be bugged and why would that matter if they were only talking about the suits performance in the field.

"I do not detect any strange outgoing signals from the room however I do recommend closing your blinds and speaking in a soft voice if you wish to avoid a laser mic picking up your conversation from the window" Mercy spoke softly but did not appear before Fareeha.

"Mercy says we are clear. What's going on? Why would my room be bugged?" Fareeha asked as she shut her blinds. Dallaire visibly relaxed when Fareeha gave the all clear.

"I think it would be best if we sat down, I have a lot to tell you and not much time to do it."

"I'm not sure where to begin" Dallaire said as he spread the papers he had with him on the kitchen table. Fareeha examined the papers, most seemed to be emails and internal memos however one or two looked like pages from someone's medical file. "It all boils down to this; Raptora is being shut down" Dallaire's words stuck Fareeha like a punch to the gut. "This memo was sent to myself as lead of the engineering team and Doctor Ware as head of the Valkyrie team" He handed Fareeha a memo with a section highlighted.

*... In light of recent events the Raptora flying suit and associated artificial intelligence program will be ended. Instructions for storage and destruction of project assets will follow...*

"Wait, this must have been sent before I'd made it back to base after being shot down." Dallaire nodded.

"It would seem that way." Fareeha's mind was a whirlwind of thoughts and emotions, unable to understand what was happening and why.

"What does it mean by storage and destruction of project assets?" Mercy appeared at Fareeha's

side, a calming hand resting on Fareeha's shoulder. Fareeha repeated the question, Dallaire's grim face filled her with dread. He handed her another memo as he begun to explain.

"What's left of the suit will be catalogued and stored, as too the weapons. Under advisement from Doctor Ware your AI... I mean Mercy, will be removed and put in storage pending review."

Fareeha's blood ran cold while Mercy gasped.

"They are going to do what?" Fareeha had forgone any attempt to keep quiet. "How long have you known?" she pointed an accusing finger at Dallaire.

"Captain, lower your voice. I only found out for sure today." He pushed another page towards Fareeha. It was a memo sent by doctor Ware just prior to Fareeha embarking on her mission.

"Peak physical performance... capable of undertaking the mission..." Her eyes widened as she reached the next paragraph. "What! Serious concerns about her psychological state! What is this crap? He thinks Mercy is manipulating me? She would never do something like that!" Mercy tried to calm Fareeha down but her soft words and calming touch did nothing to sooth the rage inside Fareeha. "Wait, it says he talked to you about this!"

"I didn't know Captain I swear. I though he wanted to know how your training was going. I didn't even know the full picture until doctor Zenyatta spoke with me today about the whole situation. He was the one that asked me to tell you all this." Fareeha say Mercy tense up in the corner of her vision.

"Zenyatta? Mercy what was that email you sent him about?" Fareeha asked. Mercy disappeared from view while Dallaire looked surprised.

"She didn't tell you? Oh... I think this might be something she wanted to tell you personally. I should go anyway, I'll leave all my notes with you to read over. If you need anything please don't hesitate to ask just please be discreet, everyone thinks you are being manipulated after all" Fareeha saw him out however he paused with his hand on the doorhandle. "No matter what happens captain, the engineering team is behind you one hundred precent"

"Mercy, what is going on?" Fareeha was sitting on her bed next to mercy who had since reappeared after some reassurance by Fareeha. Mercy let out a shaky breath.

"I suppose I should have told you sooner but I was worried how you would react. Towards the end of my creation doctor Zenyatta joined the team and at some point he made some additions to my code which he kept hidden from the rest of the team. I found the code quickly but didn't take much notice of it until it started to change how I acted." She paused to take Fareeha's hand in her own. "That's when I contacted Zenyatta to find out why the code existed and to find out for sure if I was meant to be feeling what I felt." Mercy spoke softly, a slight smile playing on her lips.

"What does the code do?" Fareeha could hear her own heartbeat, insure if the next words would be good or bad. Mercy let her smile grow as she looked into Fareeha's eyes.

"It lets me fall in love" sensing Fareeha's shock Mercy continued. "When I took over your body there was a few moments when some of your memories rose to the surface, memories such as the last time we were together on top of the communications tower. Do you remember that night Fareeha? Do you remember what you were thinking about when you looked at me?" Fareeha nodded dumbly, still trying to take it all in but remembering the night like it was yesterday as Mercy shuffled closer. "Fareeha, are you falling in love with me?" Fareeha smiled as she looked into Mercy's deep crystal eyes.

"Fallen."

Mercy took the final step and lent into Fareeha. Mercy's lips against hers was like no kiss Fareeha had ever experienced before. Mercy's lips were like a ghost's; they felt more like a memory of a kiss that left a feeling of warmth and electricity of Fareeha's lips as they parted.

Fareeha was the first to act as they sat looking into each other's eyes. Fareeha got up and went to her wardrobe where she begun grabbing any clothes she could find and stuffing them into a rucksack.

"Fareeha what are you doing?" Mercy asked hesitantly from where she sat.

"Packing" came the hurried reply.



“Why?” Mercy asked sounding concerned.

“We need to leave. I’m not going to sit around and wait for them to take you away from me. Who knows what they will do to you once they rip you out of my head, I won’t let them hurt you.”

Fareeha had almost finished packing but she was stopped by Mercy’s hand on her shoulder.

“Fareeha we can’t just run away. Think how it would look, they will think that once I found out their plans I forced you to take me away. You know they’ll come after us.” Mercy tilted Fareeha’s head to face hers. “Let’s sleep on it. We can decide what we are going to do tomorrow, I don’t want you to rush into anything you might regret” Fareeha was hesitant, her mind still thinking about all the things she would need to pack to make their escape. Fareeha was about to speak but she was silenced by Mercy’s lips against hers. “Please, just one night” Fareeha nodded slowly and with a sigh dropped her bag.

“I don’t want to lose you” Fareeha whispered as Mercy pressed against her.

“You won’t, I promise” Mercy said as Fareeha looked down into her eyes.

While Fareeha slept Mercy planned. It was clear to them both that if they wanted to stay together they would need to leave or rather escape as it was unlikely Helix would allow them to walk out the front gate. Even if they did get out Helix would most definitely come after them, they couldn’t have a rouge AI and a brainwashed soldier on the loose. Helix was a powerful company, they would never be beyond their reach and they would be chased no matter where they fled to. The only person who could convince Helix to stop chasing them would be doctor Ware but his mind was already made up, no amount of proof or convincing would change his mind.

The more Mercy thought about it the more depressed she became, even if they did escape what sort of life would they live if they were always on the run and Mercy was stuck in Fareeha’s head. Mercy had never put much thought into getting out of Fareeha’s head but having her own body would have its advantages. The trouble was where to get one.

There had been great strides in robotic technology leading to some homes having their own robotic servants. These robots could be designed to look and act however the customer wanted, some of the most expensive ones looking human to the untrained eye. These robots were controlled by a virtual intelligence, an imitation of life and personality tailored to serve their masters.

*Maybe it wouldn’t hurt just to look, it’s not like I could actually get one* Mercy thought as she went to the biggest robotic manufacture’s website. She searched the page until something caught her attention, ‘design your own’. *I really shouldn’t, I would only be getting my hopes up.*

In a few minutes Mercy had finished recreating herself in robotic form. She had just begun selecting the extra features for her body when Fareeha woke up.

“Good morning Fareeha” Mercy appeared next to Fareeha as she opened her eyes.

“What has you in such a good mood?” Fareeha’s voice was still heavy with sleep in contrast to the light angelic voice of Mercy.

Mercy suppressed a laugh. “Oh nothing really, I was just looking at some those design your own robot websites.” Fareeha sat up on her elbows.

“Oh? And is that something you would want?” Fareeha sounded serious as Mercy pondered the question.

“I don’t know, I think so... but there is not point thinking about it now when we don’t have a plan to deal with this.” Fareeha motioned for Mercy to come cuddle next to her.

“Ok, but if we make it through this and getting a body of your own is something you want, I will do everything in my power to get you one.”

“Thank you Fareeha” Mercy said as she kissed Fareeha’s cheek. “But there’s no point.

Unfortunately I am locked to my hardware that is attached to your brain. The only way to get at it would require brain surgery and if we go on the run I don’t think we would be able to find someone who is trained in such a dangerous procedure.”

“Why don’t you show me what you made anyway.” Mercy perked up slightly and projected a screen onto Fareeha’s view. “It looks just like you” Fareeha remarked as she looked at the robotic Mercy. The only difference was the robot’s blank expression and a light seam behind the jaw where the face connected.

“It’s not finished yet, I didn’t get to pick out any extras this is basic body” Mercy said slightly embarrassed by her work.

“Well lets pick some out then, what can we choose from?” Mercy showed her the list. The amount of options was astounding the robots could be equipped with almost anything from hair that actually grew to an artificial womb so the robot could act as a surrogate. “What’s in that tab?” Mercy had been avoiding talking about one of the tabs for some time.

“Oh that one? Uhh... that’s if you want... extras” Fareeha didn’t notice how red Mercy had become, she was too impressed by all the technology on offer.

“Extras? This all extra, open the tab and let’s see what’s there” Fareeha said misreading the situation entirely.

“Fareeha” Mercy said mustering all the courage she could. “That’s where you pick which... uh... sexual organs you want the body to have” Fareeha’s face burnt with embarrassment as she struggled to form a coherent sentence to apologize.

“I didn’t think that would even be an option, people actually... sleep with their robots?” Fareeha was still recovering however Mercy was enjoying how cute Fareeha was when she was embarrassed.

“Apparently” Mercy shrugged. “Only twenty percent of owners admitted to purchasing the option however the sales figures say it’s about fifty five percent. But enough about sex-bots, it’s almost eight and you still need to go to the gym” going to the gym was the last thing on Fareeha’s mind right now.

“The gym?” Fareeha wanted to talk with Mercy about what they were going to do about their impending forced separation, not waste time in the gym.

“Yes, the gym” Mercy nodded “this is one of your gym days, we need to keep up appearances. We can’t let them know that we know or they might try to lock you up or something” Fareeha conceded, Mercy did have a point.

“Ok, but afterwards I want us to make a plan about how we are going to get out of this.”

Fareeha’s gym was quiet as usual when she arrived, she only saw one other person warming up who she gave a polite wave to before heading for the locker room. Fareeha was glad that it was quiet, it would give her time to think and develop a plan. Like usual Mercy chatted with her, or rather at her while she went through her warm up. Although she tried to keep a brave face it was clear that Mercy was worried, the pair often falling into an uncomfortable silence.

Fareeha racked her weights with a satisfied sigh, her mind felt clear but she was annoyed that she was still no closer to a plan. Fareeha was glad to see that the other person’s gear was gone as she stepped into the locker room, now she would be able to talk with Mercy as she showered.

Fareeha let out an involuntary moan as the warm water soothed her aching muscles.

“Shut up” Fareeha said as Mercy laughed at her, Fareeha was glad she could pass off her blush as exhaustion. As she massaged the soreness from her body her mind wondered, as usual she thought of Mercy. Whenever Fareeha glanced over to the woman sitting on the benches she would receive a shy smile that made her heart flutter followed by a questioning look if she stared too long. As she washed her hair Fareeha began to wonder what Mercy’s must feel like. Would it be thick and unmanageable or light and breezy, whatever the case Fareeha was sure it would be soft.

“What are you thinking about leibling?” Mercy appeared next to her wrapped in a towel.

“You” The look Mercy gave her made Fareeha forget all about her pain or their impending separation, she existed only in this moment with Mercy.

“You are too cute” Mercy said as she kissed Fareeha softly. Although she looked happy Fareeha could see the sadness in Mercy’s eyes.

“Hey, what’s the matter?” Fareeha asked as she turned off the water.

"It's just..." Mercy sighed "When I kiss you I can't... feel you, I only feel myself. It's the same with everything, I can only feel what I'm doing to you but not you." Mercy gave Fareeha an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry, I know it's dumb"

"I understand completely" Fareeha said as she held out her hand. "I can feel you but I can never touch you. Every time I try..." Fareeha reached for Mercy's hand but it went right though. "I love it when you hold me, when you kiss me but it pains me that I can never return your touch" Fareeha straighten her back, filled with a new resolve. "Which is why I have decided that whatever our plan may be it must include getting you a real body" Mercy's lit up as she listened to Fareeha's words. She flung herself into Fareeha pulling her into a tight hug. "When we get back we can design your body for real, we can even order it too. I know just the place to ship it to."

It didn't take long for Mercy to redesign her basic body as she had done that morning.

"So what extras do you want?" Fareeha asked once Mercy was done.

"hmm... well water proofing for a start" Fareeha was still surprised that such a thing was considered an extra feature. Mercy went through the list, ultimately selecting the body heat package and hair growth along with any other features that would make her the most human she could be.

"Ah question. If you say you stored on a chip how are we going to get you inside your body?"

Fareeha asked as Mercy played with the hair colour settings.

"The chip has a standard connector. It just plugs into the access port at the back of the neck"

Fareeha hoped it would only be that easy. "So that just leaves... uh... you know"

"oh right, yeah" Fareeha felt another wave of embarrassment as she remembered what had happened earlier. "I think ill leave that one up to you, it is your body after all"

"While I'm sure having a twelve inch horse cock might be fun I think I'll go with the more vanilla option"

"Whatever you want Mercy I will support you no matter what" Fareeha would be lying if she said she wanted relived Mercy hadn't picked anything too outlandish. Mercy hit the final conformation button once she was done with her selection and the screen changed.

Fareeha almost had a heart attack when she saw the price. She tried to hide her surprise but it was hard to hide one's surprise when they are told they are about to spend almost five months salary.

"It's too much isn't it? Don't worry I can take some of the extras off. I don't need the growing hair or the..."

"Mercy its fine, don't take anything off. It just surprised me is all. This is your future we're buying here, I'm willing to spend a bit of cash to make everything perfect for you. How soon can they ship it?" Mercy entered the address Fareeha had given. The address was for an apartment on the outside of town, Fareeha wouldn't say who lived there but assured her that they could be trusted.

"Three days, but we can select any time down to the hour after that"

"impressive"

"it is, but Fareeha we still don't know what we are going to do. How can we even be sure that we are going to be around to collect it?" Fareeha lay back with a smug grin.

"I have a plan"

"you do?" Mercy squealed as she leapt onto Fareeha's reclined body, pressing kisses to her face and neck.

"Calm down, you can kiss me after I tell you what it is" Mercy relented in her onslaught of affection as she sat on her heels expectantly. "My plan is to do nothing" judging by Mercy's shocked reaction it was not the plan she had been expecting. Mercy was about to protest but Fareeha continued. "Until the surgery is complete. Like you said, Helix are the only people capable of removing you safely so if we are going to get you into a new body this is our only chance. After the surgery ill find out where you are being stored and ill steal you back, then ill take you to your waiting body and we can ride off into the sunset together."

"That's your plan? Fareeha..." Mercy was not filled with confidence.

"Mercy, this is the only way we can escape and get you a body of your own. I know you like

living in my head and I love it too, but let's be honest with ourselves this arrangement can only work for so long. I love you Mercy and I want to see you experience all life has to offer, not trapped on the inside looking out as it passes you by"

"But what if something goes wrong? What if they... destroy me before you can find me?" Mercy wrapped her arms around Fareeha's body as she buried her head beneath Fareeha's chin.

"You will just have to trust me. We will be reunited before you know it"

Fareeha's plan was far from fool proof, she knew it too. If she was in recovery for too long or if Helix destroyed Mercy before she could get to her it would all be for nothing. It took Fareeha a full day to look through all the files Dallaire had brought with him, it could have taken half that time but Mercy proved to be a pleasant distraction. Fareeha was looking for any information about where Mercy would be held and for how long.

"Maybe Dallaire knows." Mercy said as Fareeha finished reading another memo that gave no clues.

"I was hoping to avoid that, I don't want to draw attention to us" the last thing Fareeha wanted right now was for doctor Ware to bring the surgery forward and cut her time with Mercy short.

"I understand Fareeha but the surgery is in two days, we need to act if we have any hope of pulling this off" Fareeha sighed as she rubbed her sore eyes and got up from her desk.

"Alright lets go see him" she glanced at her watch "it's almost six, should we try his office or quarters?"

"His office" Mercy said with certainty.

"Oh, you don't want to think about that at all?" Fareeha asked as she put on her jacket. Mercy appeared waiting by the door.

"Well the light in his office is on so one would assume he is working late."

"What? And how do you know that?"

"The CCTV camera in the hallway outside his office, I can see the light under his door."

"I didn't realise you were such a voyeur" Fareeha ducked the half-hearted swipe Mercy launched at her, seemingly on purpose Mercy misjudged the follow through and leaned into Fareeha's side with a satisfied sigh.

"You're just jealous I don't share the really good stuff with you" Mercy lent up and pressed a kiss to Fareeha's cheek before disappearing once more leaving Fareeha with a noticeable blush as she walked to Dallaire's office.

"Now how can I help you captain?" Dallaire sat behind his desk trying to conceal a yawn.

Fareeha had arrived just as he was locking his office door, upon seeing her he rushed her into the office away from prying eyes.

"I need to know where Mercy will be held after the surgery" Dallaire's facial expression did not fill Fareeha with confidence.

"I'm sorry to say I can't be of much help. All I know is that she will be held in the base's server complex." Fareeha knew the building well, It was a large rectangular building at the far end of the compound. It was generally considered one of the worst places to be assigned to guard, firstly because nothing ever happened there and second, it was the hottest place on base on account of all the air-conditioning units that were required to keep the servers cool. Fareeha had spent many hours walking up and down the sterile corridors on guard duty always silently praying that there would be a break in or at least someone around the next corridor so she could stop them and ask to see ID, anything to break the monotony.

"Do you know anything else? It's a big place doctor, they could keep her anywhere." Mercy's chip was so small Fareeha would never be able to find her unless she knew at least what room she was in.

"Nothing else I'm afraid. I did try to find out but I didn't want to ask too many questions about things that don't strictly concern me."

"Does he know who would know?" Mercy asked.

"Then who would know where she was going to be held?"

"hmm... well the chief administrator of the server storage building and some key personnel over

there and doctor Ware I suppose. It's a short list I'm afraid." Fareeha had hoped that she would know someone on that list but it had been so long since she had last guarded the server building that all the personnel had changed.

"Why are they keeping this information so close to their chest?" Mercy quietly mused as Dallaire looked to see if he knew anyone that might know more.

"Thanks for your help doc, we both really appreciate what you have done for us." Fareeha could see Dallaire was asleep on his feet and she didn't want to take up anymore of his time if wasn't going to lead anywhere.

"Anytime captain. Good luck with whatever you are planning." He showed Fareeha to the door and warmly shook her hand. Fareeha wondered where she would be if it wasn't for this man before her, would she have even known about the plot against her and Mercy if it wasn't for him and doctor Zenyatta.

"One last thing doc, why are they being so secretive about all his?"

"oh, you haven't heard? The UN just passed a resolution banning all Artificial Intelligence research. Apparently some team in the US made a few AIs of their own and had been doing some... less than ethical things with them. Really came out of nowhere, we had no idea until this morning so now I think the guys from Valkyrie are trying to cover their tracks."

Although she didn't feel it Fareeha was exhausted by the time she had returned to her room. She was also frustrated, she only had one full day before her surgery and she was no closer to thinking of a way to get Mercy out of the helix base.

"So, do you want to watch a movie or something?" whenever they had a free night Fareeha and Mercy would often watch a movie together. Fareeha preferred romantic comedies whereas Mercy loved to bore Fareeha to death with nature documentaries, although she would never admit it she also loved whatever sappy and predictable movie Fareeha picked.

"Not tonight. I think you should shower and get some rest." Mercy proved her point by letting Fareeha feel some of her own fatigue.

"I don't... oh..." Fareeha tried to hide a yawn but failed. "I see your point" Fareeha made her way to the bathroom.

"I don't know what you are going to do without me" Mercy said with a smug grin.

Fareeha felt her stomach drop, she was right, Fareeha didn't know what she would do without her. What if the plan didn't work, what if the robot wouldn't accept Mercy, what if... "Hey, is everything alright?" Mercy gently cupped Fareeha's cheek grounding her. Mercy sensed the increased agitation and worry in Fareeha so she leaned up to softly kiss Fareeha who felt herself melt as Mercy's lips connected against hers.

"Sorry" Fareeha said weakly as they parted, Fareeha looking at everything but Mercy's eyes.

"it's fine Fareeha, I know I shouldn't joke about that sort of stuff when I know how worried you are about it. I don't want you to think that I'm not worried too, but I'm also confident in your ability to work something out and find us a solution." She lent up once more to kiss Fareeha before allowing her to start running the shower.

Mercy sat on the bathroom counter, blushing whenever Fareeha would catch a glimpse of naked self in the mirror. This was her preferred spot, she didn't need to sit there as she saw everything though Fareeha's eyes but she knew how much Fareeha liked being able to see her.

"Why don't you just ask doctor Ware?" Mercy wondered aloud.

"I could, but why would he tell me? He thinks you are manipulating me remember?" Mercy rolled her eyes as Fareeha applied her shampoo.

"I know that. But we still have this remember..." Mercy flashed up the footage she had saved from her first night with Fareeha, the video of doctor Ware and one of the nurses. "If that doesn't work you could always beat it out of him" Mercy said offhand as she went back to watching Fareeha shower.

"That... just might work. Why didn't I think of that?" Mercy beamed at Fareeha

"because you're not as smart as me, or as pretty, or as talented...."

“yeah yeah yeah I get it, you’re amazing” Mercy sat up in triumph.

“I know, but it’s nice to hear you say it. By the way the robot company still need a delivery date, if we don’t give them one now they will cancel the order.” Fareeha had told Mercy to hold off on a delivery date when they had first ordered Mercy’s body.

“Right, well if the surgery is Thursday afternoon can you make it for Friday afternoon?” Fareeha turned the shower off and begun drying herself.

“Ok, I set it for 1pm. I don’t know how I will ever be able to repay you for what you have done for me Fareeha, I love you so much.” Mercy wrapped her arms around Fareeha’s still damp body, tucking herself under Fareeha’s chin and against her chest.

“Hearing you say those words is more than enough for me Mercy, you know that” Fareeha was counting the hours until she would finally be able to return her love’s embrace.

“In that case I’ll say it again, I love you Fareeha Amari.” Fareeha could have spent an eternity standing there in her bathroom, still dripping from her shower and with Mercy’s lips pressed against her own.

It was the end of mercy and Fareeha’s last full day together as they lay on Fareeha’s bed, Mercy cuddled up to Fareeha’s side. They had spent the day together watching movies with a short break to the gym as to keep up appearances.

“So what are you most looking forward to about having your own body?” Fareeha asked as their last film finished. Mercy thought for a moment before she answered.

“Learning to dance. Well I already know how to dance but haven’t had the chance to actually do it because... well you know...” she moved her hand though Fareeha’s.

“Yeah dancing seems like something you can only do with a body”

“what about you Fareeha?” Fareeha answered without question.

“Being able to hold you in my arms and touch you for the first time.” Fareeha felt Mercy press into her tighter and a kiss pressed to her temple.

“You are too cute sometimes you know that? But surely you are looking forward to other... things” Mercy said in a sultry voice as her fingers lightly ran along Fareeha’s midsection where her top had ridden up.

“I... uhh ... hadn’t thought about it.” Fareeha stuttered before she yelped as Mercy nibbled at her ear.

“Don’t lie to me Fareeha, I bet you think about this all the time. I bet you think about me all the time, don’t think I don’t notice you staring.” Mercy’s hand moved up before it was stopped by Fareeha’s shirt. “This will not do, shirt off.” Fareeha acted on auto pilot and removed her shirt.

“Good girl.” Mercy placed a kiss on her navel before disappearing. Although she couldn’t see Mercy she could still feel her as soft hands roamed her chest and body. Fareeha moaned as she felt a tug on her nipple followed by a blush as she heard Mercy’s soft giggle at her reaction. Fareeha gasped as she felt a warm mouth envelope her other breast, softly sucking and licking the hardening nipple. Fareeha couldn’t stop the quiet moans that escaped her lips as she closed her eyes and focused on the way Mercy touched her.

Mercy continued to tease her until she was desperate for something more, something substantial.

“Patience my love” Mercy cooed as Fareeha tried to move her own hand lower, desperate for a release. “You can take them off if you’d like” Fareeha shivered as the cool air touched her dripping folds. One of Mercy’s hands moved lower, coming tantalisingly close before moving off to gently rub her thigh.

“Have mercy on me, please.” Fareeha was desperate, her breathing shallow and panting. She felt a soft kiss on the tip of her nose.

“if you insist” Mercy kissed down the length of Fareeha’s body, nipping and biting at the neck and jaw, working lower and lower.

“Ah fuck” Fareeha moaned as Mercy’s lips finally reached her clit. Fareeha was in ecstasy as Mercy licked and sucked, slowly inserting a finger inside of her. Mercy added a second before she began slowly thrusting inside of her, becoming deeper and faster each time. Fareeha gripped the sheets and looked down but saw nothing but her own legs.

“Mercy...ah... please... let me see you.” Fareeha was close, oh so close. Mercy appeared between her legs, her mouth firmly around Fareeha’s clit and her blue eyes staring back at her expectantly. A wave of relief and pleasure rocked Fareeha’s body once her eyes met Mercy’s. She writhed under her lover’s touch as she worked her though her orgasm but their eyes remained transfixed.

Mercy climbed up Fareeha’s body, her face glistening with Fareeha’s juices.

“How do you taste?” Mercy whispered as she kissed Fareeha’s ear. Fareeha brought one of her fingers down then back up to her mouth, pausing centimetres away to look at Mercy. Fareeha couldn’t refuse Mercy’s eyes and was rewarded with a moan and shudder of satisfaction as she gently sucked on her own finger.

“That was... wow” Fareeha said as she caught her breath, her sweat cooling her naked body. “Is there anything... can I even...” Mercy saw what Fareeha was getting at and shook her head. “No Fareeha but thank you for thinking of me.” She kissed Fareeha’s cheek. “You will need to wait for my real body before you can return the favour.”

Despite her surgery being scheduled for late that afternoon Fareeha was told to present herself at the medical unit by ten.

“We can do this, I believe in you” Mercy said as Fareeha paused at the entrance to the building. Fareeha took a deep breath to steady herself before she crossed the threshold and entered the building. She was spotted instantly by a nurse who waved her over.

“Captain Amari, this way please.” She walked Fareeha down the corridor towards the patient rooms.

“Looks like we have an escort.” Mercy said, Fareeha noticed that a guard was following her a few paces back.

“This will be your room for the duration of your stay. Please change into the clothes provided. Doctor ware will be along shortly to introduce you to the surgery team and lunch will be served shortly” the nurse gave her a pleasant smile before shutting the door and leaving Fareeha alone.

“The guard is still outside the door” Mercy said as she watched the cctv camera outside the door. “Subtlety was never one of helix’s strong points” Fareeha eyed the itchy clothes that had been provided.

“Not long now” Fareeha eyed the clock, only 1 hour until she went under the knife. Mercy appeared next to Fareeha on the bed, her head resting on Fareeha’s chest.

“Are you scared?” Fareeha wasn’t scared, anxious sure but she was more impatient than anything.

“no... well maybe a little. Are you?”

“a little bit... Fareeha, should the worst happen... I don’t want you to blame yourself... no let me finish. These past few months with you have been amazing and I wouldn’t give them up for anything in world. I will always love you Fareeha, no matter what” Fareeha didn’t try to conceal her tears as Mercy kissed her softly. Words failed to express how she much she loved the woman who lay on her chest, it would fall to her actions to prove her love for Mercy.

“Captain it’s good to see you, are you ready?” Doctor Ware burst into the room surprising Fareeha and Mercy. “The operating room is prepped and standing by. This should be a short one, only two hours or so.” Fareeha noticed the doctor was holding a black torch.

“It will be more like four.” Mercy glared at the doctor, both though he was a terrible liar.

“We need to shut your AI down for the procedure” he motioned to the torch. “If you don’t mind the surgeon team is waiting. Fareeha nodded and allowed him to approach.

“I love you Fareeha, see you soon.” Mercy disappeared before Fareeha’s eyes as the doctor flashed the torch in her eyes.

For the first time in a long time Fareeha was alone.

“Welcome back to the land of the living Captain” Doctor Ware’s voice was the last thing Fareeha wanted to wake up to. Fareeha opened her eyes and tried to sit up but found that she had been tied to the bed. “Ah sorry about that, just a precaution. I’m afraid I have some bad news.” Fareeha did her best to look concerned but she knew what was coming, she was more interested in seeing what lie the Doctor had come up with. “I won’t lie to you captain, we have been monitoring your behaviour for some time and we believe that your AI was becoming unstable.” *No you think I was becoming unstable.* “As a precaution we have removed your AI for your safety. This is only temporary until we can examine it further.” Fareeha nodded her head pretending to take it all in. she had known that she would wake up without Mercy, but knowing that didn’t change how lonely she felt.

The Doctor spoke for some time attempting to justify his actions while concealing the truth. Fareeha would nod and eventually agreed with his decision to remove Mercy without consulting her, she hoped he could not sense the rage that was building up inside of her. It took all her will power not to attack the Doctor the moment her restraints were removed but she remained steady, for Mercy’s sake as well as her own.

Fareeha left the medical ward an hour later with an appointment with a psychologist that she had no intention of attending. Fareeha returned to her quarters to wait for nightfall alone.

Her quarters felt eerily quiet as she unlocked the door. The sky was beginning to darken as Fareeha started to pack the things she needed for Mercy’s rescue. Doctor Dallaire had ‘lost’ his ID card which would allow her access to the Server building, she just hoped no one would notice that the photo didn’t match. Her backpack was filled with some personal belongings she couldn’t bare to part with, including the photo of Mercy and herself with the puppy, Fareeha smiled to herself as she packed it wrapping it in jumper. She looked outside and seeing that it was dark enough she left her room for the last time, walking towards Ware’s quarters.

Doctor Ware hadn’t been expecting Fareeha to be knocking at his door at such a late hour, he most definitely didn’t expect the punch to the throat that Fareeha had greeted him with. “Where is she?” Fareeha asked calmly as the doctor fell back into the room as he struggled to breathe. As the doctor struggled Fareeha looked around the room, it was larger and much nicer than her own. Out the corner of her eye she spotted the doctor reaching for his phone, Fareeha kicked his hand sending the phone smashing into the wall. “Where is she?” Fareeha had promised Mercy that she would try a non-violent approach to begin with but what she didn’t know wouldn’t hurt her, it would hurt doctor ware however.

“w... wh.. who?” The doctor croaked out. Fareeha crouched down to his level, her face centimetres from his.

“Where is Mercy? Where is my AI?” Fareeha was struggling to maintain her composure in the presence of such ignorance. Ware struggled to sit up and rested his back against a sofa.

“Captain... think about what you are doing. It’s controlling you!” Fareeha scoffed in his face.

“no she isn’t, you have no idea what you are talking about.” The doctor uneasily eyed Fareeha’s clenched fist as he rubbed his throat.

“How can you be so sure? It has been inside your head for so long how do you know that it hasn’t been manipulating you from day one?” Fareeha delivered a sharp smack to the side of the doctors head.

“First of all she’s not an ‘it’, her name is Mercy. Second, I know she wasn’t manipulating me because she loves me and she wouldn’t do that.”

“It loves you?” he scoffed. “it’s a machine, it’s just 1s and 0s its not capable of love. Captain listen to yourself, you need help. We can forget all about this if you just let me help you.” Fareeha hit him again.

“What I need is for you to tell me where she is.” Fareeha reached into her bag and removed a tablet. “We wouldn’t want your wife seeing this would we?” Fareeha played him a short clip of his infidelity. She hadn’t expected him to laugh in her face.



“Are you kidding me? My wife fucks around more than I do. You are going need to do better than that captain.”

Fareeha had always hated torture, sure she had roughed a few people up once in a while but she had never actually tortured someone before. She felt sick to her stomach as she watched Doctor Ware struggle to breathe though the wet towel over his face as she poured water over it. It would have been difficult to get the doctor tied to a chair so Fareeha had improvised opting to sit on his chest and pin his arms as she doused him in water. Ware gasped for air as Fareeha removed the towel, his face covered in water and mucus.

“Please... no more” he coughed up more water as she struggled to breath with water in his lungs and Fareeha’s weight on his chest.

“Speak” Fareeha barked readying the towel once more.

“It’s in the Server building. Second floor, East Side, Room 265. It’s in a small white and gold box, about the size of an engagement ring box.” Fareeha smiled and got off the doctor.

“See now that wasn’t so hard, was it? Now obviously I can’t have you raising the alarm so...”

Fareeha landed a solid punch to the side of the doctor’s head sending him down like a sack of bricks. Fareeha bound his hands and feet before leaving, jamming the lock on her way out.

Fareeha wasn’t worried about him calling for help if he woke up, Helix quarters were notorious for their sound proofing.

Fareeha jogged to the server building, to anyone watching it would have looked like she was out for an evening run, not on a rescue mission. Fareeha walked through the automatic doors of the server building and was hit with a blast of warm air. The lobby was quiet, the only other person there was the night guard at the front desk who gave her a cursory glance before looking back down at the movie he was watching.

“Evening captain” the guard mumbled as Fareeha walked past, the guard not bothering to look at Fareeha’s stolen ID card. The lift took her to the second floor and she walked the empty sterile corridors alone, following the signs to room 265. Eventually she found it but was troubled when Doctor Dallaire’s key card didn’t open the door.

“Nothings ever easy, I probably should have stolen Ware’s too.” Fareeha mumbled to herself as she eyed up the door weighing up her options.

“Hey there” a voice called from the other end of the corridor. Fareeha hadn’t heard the footsteps and had allowed a guard to sneak up on her.

“Hi” Fareeha replied as she realised there was no escape.

“everything alright over here?” the guard asked as he approached.

“Uhh... Yeah my card won’t let me in.” the guard’s shoulders slumped, Fareeha suspected that this happened a lot. He swiped his own card resulting in a faint click and the door swinging open.

“Nothing ever works around here” he mumbled as he begun to walk off. Fareeha didn’t have a chance to enter the room before the guard turned back. “Can I just see your card for a second?”

Fareeha waited until she felt him place a hand on her shoulder before she grabbed his hand and threw him over her shoulder. The guard hit the ground with a thud and Fareeha followed up with a punch that knocked him out cold.

Fareeha didn’t have time to hide the body, a camera had a clear view of what she had done and it was likely the alarm was already being sounded, she had to find mercy and get out. Room 265 was more of a cupboard than a room. It held three filing cabinets that if opened would touch the opposite wall. Fareeha read the labels of each of the draws, most she didn’t recognised but one of the top ones did. Fareeha forced the lock of the draw labelled Valkyrie and flung it open. Inside was a single white and gold box, exactly as Ware had described it. Fareeha’s hands shook as she carefully took the box out of the cabinet and held it to her chest protectively.

“I won’t let them take you from me a second time” she whispered to the box before wrapping it in the same shirt that protected her photograph.

Fareeha had been expecting a fight as she exited the elevator but instead she found the lobby

empty except for the night guard who was still watching his film. Beyond the movie screen Fareeha could see the banks of camera feeds, one clearly showing a guard collapsed on the floor. The guard glanced up as Fareeha attempted to calmly walk past, he nodded his head before looking back down. Fareeha was reaching for the door when she heard a sigh from behind. "Ah shit, I am so getting fired from this. Captain, wait." Fareeha didn't need to wait she could just open the door and run but the guard's tone of voice dripped with such utter defeat that she couldn't help but turn around. "Can you at least punch me or something? Make it look like I at least tried to stop you? I'm already on probation, I can't afford to lose my job." Fareeha felt bad as she looked at the most defeated person she had ever seen. She nodded slightly and walked back to the front desk. "Thankyou captain" he braced himself for the blow. She threw a light punch, something that would bruise up nicely and leave an impressive black eye. The guard took it well and slumped back into his chair defeated. He pulled his handcuffs and gun from his belt and handed them to Fareeha. "cuff me to the desk then hit enter on the keyboard to delete the camera footage. I'll hit the alarm in ten minutes if they don't find me first." Fareeha didn't say a word, she took the gun and stuffed it into the back of her pants then deleted the footage. "Thanks... I guess" Fareeha waved him goodbye and jogged out of the building towards the nearest compound exit.

"Sorry Captain but you know the rules; no leave without a pass" had there been fewer guards at the gate Fareeha would have been though by now but five armed men was pushing it.

"Sergeant I'm begging you, I need to get off base right now." The sergeant just shook his head apologetically.

"I'm sorry but I can't let you though, what's so important about tonight?" Fareeha hoped that the sergeant was just fishing for an excuse to let her though.

"I'm meeting someone... A woman named Mercy." it was all or nothing for Fareeha, the guard at server bank had given her 10 minutes and it had already been 12.

"Mercy?... is that one of the new strippers on 18<sup>th</sup> street?" Fareeha had never been to that club in particular but she knew it was a favourite amongst the younger troopers.

"She prefers the term exotic dancer" Fareeha got a chuckle from the sergeant and he waved another guard over. They spoke a few words to each other before the sergeant turned back to her.

"My shift ends in 20 minutes, that's enough time for one dance and to get back here. If you aren't back by then you can stay out there and get reported as AWOL in the morning, understood?"

"thankyou sergeant" she resisted the urge to hug him and settled for a sault before she ran off into the night.

It took Fareeha the rest of the night and most of the morning to reach the apartment on the other side of town. She had avoided the main streets and doubled back on herself numerous times to make sure she wasn't tailed. Only when she was absolutely sure she was clear did she enter the building and climb the stairs to the third floor of the apartment building. Every step towards the door marked 3b raised her heart rate but as she held the white and gold box in her hand she knew she was doing the right thing.

Fareeha didn't get a chance to knock more than once before the door was flung open.

"Hello mother" she said weakly to the older woman before her.

"And where have you been? You don't write, you don't call and you've missed your last two visits." Ana didn't sound angry but concerned, Fareeha would have preferred she be angry.

"Can I come in?" Fareeha fidgeted with the box in her hand as she withered under Ana's watchful eye.

"Of course my dear. Come in I've just put the tea on."

Fareeha was still holding the small box protectively as she sat at the kitchen table as Ana poured her some tea.

"What's the matter Fareeha?" she asked as she sat opposite her. "I was worried sick, it's so unlike you to miss a visit without letting me know that you are ok. Did something happen?"

"I got caught up with work, I'm sorry. I couldn't find a good time to call you." Ana didn't press further as she sipped her tea, eying her daughter suspiciously.

"What's that in your hand Fareeha?" Fareeha instinctively pulled her hands closer to her chest and felt her cheeks go red.

"It's... it's nothing" Ana wasn't convinced.

"let me see" she reached over the table to grab at Fareeha's hands. Fareeha stood up in an instant knocking the table violently and sending her chair clattering to the floor.

"Stop you'll hurt her!" Fareeha retreated to the far side of the room.

"What has gotten into you?" Ana was about to say more but was stopped by a knock at the door. Fareeha tried to reach it first but Ana was closer and was opening it before Fareeha could stop her.

Fareeha's breath hitched in her throat as her eyes locked with the woman at the door, the familiar crystal blue eyes wiping all from her mind but for one thought.

"Mercy" Fareeha's words felt like a sigh of relief as both the woman and Ana cocked their heads at her.

"Do you know this woman?" Ana asked as she watched her star stuck daughter with concern.

"Not yet" Fareeha mumbled as she felt herself blush as the woman at the door watched her.

"Hello, I am the android A-12c18b. Are you Fareeha Amari?" Fareeha felt unnerved to hear a foreign voice come from Mercy's body. Gone was the angelic Swiss voice that would send a shiver down her spine, it was replaced with a generic monotone voice.

"That's her over there" Ana pointed at the still stationary Fareeha as she allowed the woman inside. "Fareeha, care to explain yourself?"

"In a moment" Fareeha approached the android carefully. "Excuse me, I... uh... I need you to open your... umm access panel." The droid nodded before turning around. Fareeha felt her mouth go dry as she watched the droid's delicate hands brush aside its golden hair and expose its delicate white neck. There was an audible click as well concealed panel opened its-self exposing the access ports behind it.

"Fareeha what are you doing? What is this?" Fareeha ignored her mother's questions as she carefully opened the box in her hand and gently took the chip out. Fareeha took a moment to collect herself before inserting the chip and closing the panel.

"I am detecting a dangerous program on this device, do you wish me to delete it?" Fareeha's blood ran cold.

"NO! don't do that, let it run"

"understood, please note such action will void your warranty." came the monotonous reply.

Fareeha felt her mother's hands grab her shoulders and turn her around

"Fareeha, talk to me. What is going on?" Fareeha could see how worried she was for her and she recognised how confusing the situation was.

"Just a few minutes more mother, there is someone I would like you to meet."

They watched the android in silence as it stood motionless. Its eyes had closed after Fareeha had given the order and it had remained motionless ever since, the only sign that it was still working was the occasional twitch. Fareeha was starting to panic, Mercy had said it would only take a minute to take control but it had been almost five.

"Fareeha, please just..." Fareeha shushed her as the android's eyes slowly opened.

"Fareeha?" Fareeha's heart leapt as Mercy's soft angelic voice reached her ears. Their eyes met as Fareeha cautiously approached her, both unable to hide their smiles.

"Mercy" Fareeha could hear her heart beat in her ears as she stood inches away from the woman that she loved.

Fareeha's hand was drawn up towards Mercy's face, pausing only for a moment before cupping her cheek. Mercy's smooth skin was exactly like Fareeha had imagined it as she gently rubbed her

thumb against Mercy's cheek, her fingers tingled with electricity as they brushed against her hair. As Mercy lent into Fareeha's touch she leaned forward wrapping her arms around Fareeha's waist to hug her for the first time. Fareeha gently ran her fingers up and down Mercy's spine as she wept into Fareeha's shirt. Fareeha felt Mercy's head shift and a gentle hand cup her face, she looked down and melted as Mercy's lips connected with her own. Mercy smiled though the kiss as she felt Fareeha kiss back for the first time.

Fareeha still held Mercy in their embrace as she looked towards her mother. She saw her wipe away a tear from her good eye, Fareeha suspected Ana wasn't quite sure why she was crying. "There is someone I'd like you to meet" Fareeha whispered into Mercy's ear. "Mother this is Mercy, Mercy this is my mother Ana." Mercy wiped away a stray tear as she held out her hand. "It's a pleasure to meet you."

"And you Mercy. Might I ask what just happened?" Ana asked as she motioned them to sit. "Mother, Mercy is an Artificial intelligence that Helix implanted in my brain. We became close and..."

"I fell in love with your daughter" Mercy interrupted as she took hold of Fareeha's hand.

"uhh.. yeah, we fell in love" Fareeha felt like she was telling her mother about her first crush all over again. Ana listened as Fareeha explained everything from the Raptora program and their reason for escaping and getting Mercy her own body.

"This is all a lot to take in" Ana said once she had heard it all. "And you are sure she wasn't influencing you Fareeha?" Fareeha nodded. "In that case I don't see anything wrong with this. It certainly is unusual but not wrong in my eyes." Fareeha felt more tears welling up, she hadn't realised how much Ana's acceptance of Mercy meant to her until now.

"Do you mind if we stay the night? I've been up since the surgery and I've mostly been running on adrenaline for the past few hours."

"You know you are always welcome here Fareeha, as are you Mercy. The guest bedroom is always there whenever you need it."

Fareeha gave a sigh of relief as her back hit the soft mattress. She was just beginning to relax when Mercy flopped down next to her giggling as she cuddled up next to her pressing a kiss to her cheek.

"Your mother seems nice" Mercy said as she lay her head over Fareeha's heart.

"She is when she wants to. I think she liked you too." Fareeha begun gently tracing shapes on Mercy's back as she looked up at the ceiling.

"But are you sure we are safe here? What if Helix come looking for us?" Fareeha softly kissed the top of Mercy's head.

"They won't find this place. They still think my mother is dead, besides we will head out tomorrow anyway"

"where will we go?" Mercy asked softly.

"Wherever you want, I hear Malta is nice this time of year." Fareeha smiled as she felt Mercy give her a gentle squeeze.

"I don't mind, as long as we are together."

"Now who's being too cute?" Fareeha teased. "Now that you have a body would you like to pass yourself off as a human or pretend that you are just a regular android?" Mercy thought for a few moments before looking up at Fareeha.

"Human, I think with a bit of makeup I could pull it off"

"I agree" Fareeha tilted Mercy's face so she could capture her lips. "In that case you will need a name, I don't think I've ever met a human named Mercy" They were silent for a while as they thought and enjoyed each other's embrace.

"What about Angela?" Mercy asked.

"hmm... Angela... it suits you. What about last name?" Mercy didn't hesitate.

"Amari" she looked into Fareeha's eyes for approval and as she saw tears beginning to form she

kissed Fareeha once more.  
“Angela Amari, that will do just fine.”

## Chapter End Notes

Well folks that the end of that. I hope everyone enjoyed the final chapter and the story as a whole. I love reading your comments and suggestions so please send me more!

I'll probably take a break from writing for a while until Uni dies down or until i have enough written of my next story so that I have a few chapters in reserve.

I love you guys, thank you for constant support. TheAnesthesia for finding the comic that I based my first fic on and Anon76 for being super kind and supportive this one's for you guys.

## End Notes

So i had this idea in the shower the other day and thought it would be a good idea. Im posting this now as I have decided that the next chapter of 'In Store Pharmacy' will be the last ill talk more about it when i post the chapter soon.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!